

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **THE CHAFFORD SCHOOL**

Rainham

LEA area: Havering

Unique reference number: 102342

Headteacher: Mrs C J Hassell

Reporting inspector: Dr R G Wallace  
1050

Dates of inspection: 31 January – 4 February 2000

Inspection number: 191655

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

© Crown copyright 2000

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 11-16

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Lambs Lane  
Rainham  
Essex

Postcode: RM13 9XD

Telephone number: 01708 552811

Fax number: 01708 522098

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Cllr R Emmett

Date of previous inspection: 27-31 January 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Dr R G Wallace	Registered inspector		School's results and pupils' achievements; teaching; leadership and management
Mrs S Daintrey	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; the school's care for its pupils; partnership with parents
Mrs M Cawdron	Team inspector	English	
Mr M Beale	Team inspector	Mathematics	
Mr C Parsons	Team inspector	Science	
Mr G Headley	Team inspector	Art; assessment of pupils with special educational needs	
Mr A Goodier	Team inspector	Design and technology	
Mr R Castle	Team inspector	Geography	Assessment of academic performance; accommodation; learning resources
Mr R Grogan	Team inspector	History; religious education	
Mr K McKenzie	Team inspector	Information technology	Staffing
Mrs M McElroy	Team inspector	Modern languages; equal opportunities	Curriculum
Mr J Forster	Team inspector	Music	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
Ms C Jackson	Team inspector	Physical education	

The inspection contractor was: Brookbridge Education  
2 Haselwood Drive  
Enfield  
Middlesex EN2 7BU

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Registrar, Inspection Quality Division  
The Office for Standards in Education  
Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE

## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>11</b>
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>ASSESSMENT OF PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>COMMUNITY LINKS</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>28</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The Chafford School is a comprehensive school that had 853 pupils aged 11-16 at the time of the inspection. There were rather more boys than girls, but the imbalance was insignificant except in Year 10. The school is popular and oversubscribed, serving mainly its local area. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minorities is lower than nationally but higher than in the borough. The proportion of pupils receiving free school meals is broadly average. The pupils currently in Year 7 arrived from their primary schools with attainment in the Key Stage 2 Assessment Tasks (SATs) that broadly matched the national average. The proportion of pupils judged by the school to have special educational needs is rather higher than the national average. The proportion with statements of special educational needs made by the local education authority is high both for the local area and nationally.

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

The school is providing a good quality of education for its pupils as a result of strong leadership, a high proportion of good teaching, good attitudes to learning by most of its pupils, and a secure environment where relationships are effective for learning. Attainment overall is about the national average by the end of Key Stages 3 and 4, although a little lower at Key Stage 3 than at Key Stage 4. The school is giving good value for money.

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

- The school is strongly led and directed, with a firm emphasis on improvement.
- Attainment in mathematics at GCSE is high and well above the national average. The proportion of pupils achieving A\*-C grades in five or more subjects is close to the national average and a big improvement since the previous inspection.
- A high proportion of teaching is good, very good or excellent and this is enabling pupils to make good progress.
- The pupils are on the whole well behaved with good attitudes to learning.
- Higher standards of literacy are being successfully promoted both in the English department and by an emphasis on language skills in most subjects.
- The school has strong community links.

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

- The assessment of pupils' attainment at Key Stage 3 in history, art and music is not securely based on National Curriculum skills, and the results of assessment in most subjects at both key stages are not used sufficiently to make the pupils' learning more effective.
- Whilst improvements have been made in provision for pupils with special educational needs, targets remain imprecise and are not used sufficiently by teachers.
- There are weaknesses in the curriculum. Design and technology is not taught to all pupils at Key Stage 4 as required by the National Curriculum. The arrangements for modern languages for some pupils at Key Stage 4 are unsatisfactory.

*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 January 1997. Since then, the attainment of pupils in Key Stage 3 SATs and at GCSE has risen and attendance has improved. Other aspects of the school that were good in 1997 have been sustained.

The school has responded well to most of the key issues in the previous report. Progress at Key Stage

3 is now more consistent. Analyses of the pupils' previous attainment are used and some individual targets for improvement are set by the senior management, although not all subjects make sufficient use of the data. The planning of the school's development has been much improved since the last inspection. The means to monitor the performance of pupils and teachers have been established. There has been a big improvement in the overall quality of teaching. The history department is being substantially improved. Big improvements are taking place in IT, with rising standards of work by the pupils, although IT is still not used sufficiently in most subjects. The programme for the cultural development of the pupils is now satisfactory, although that for their appreciation of other cultures is unsatisfactory.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
GCSE examinations	C	E	E	E

<i>Key</i>	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

In response to the principal previous yardsticks for raising attainment, the school has concentrated on increasing the proportion of pupils achieving Level 5 or higher in the Key Stage 3 SATs and grades A\*-C in five or more subjects at GCSE. Judged in these ways, the pupils' attainment is similar to that found nationally and has improved over the past six years. When judged by the average points score at GCSE, as in the table above, attainment is well below the national average. This is in part because a higher proportion of pupils are not entered for GCSE subjects than is usual, a practice that has now been stopped. Results in mathematics and art have been consistently the best in the school, with attainment at GCSE that is well above average.

The trend in results, again based on the average points score of all pupils, is broadly similar to that found nationally in Key Stage 3 SATs, but the improvement at GCSE has not matched the national improvement. The school achieved its targets for GCSE in 1999 and has set challenging targets for 2000 which, on the basis of present attainment in Year 11, can be achieved. In the pupils' current work, attainment in physical education and art is high. Standards of literacy are satisfactory overall, although with some weaknesses in written work at Key Stage 3. Standards of numeracy are satisfactory. Most pupils make satisfactory or good progress overall.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Attitudes to lessons are good overall, with many pupils able to work independently and show initiative.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in lessons is most often good or very good, with only occasional infringements in some science and design and technology lessons. Behaviour around the school is very good.
Personal development and relationships	Many pupils exercise responsibility and most conduct themselves with understanding of the needs of other people. Provision for the pupils' personal development is very good.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory. The school has effective methods to raise the level of attendance. A demanding target for improved attendance is within the school's grasp on the basis of figures so far this year.

The pupils' attitudes and behaviour are strengths of the school.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

A high proportion of teaching in English at both key stages is good or very good. In mathematics all teaching at Key Stage 4 is at least satisfactory, with some good or very good; at Key Stage 3 there is both excellent and unsatisfactory teaching. In science most teaching is satisfactory or good, with a higher proportion of the better teaching at Key Stage 3.

Strong features of the good teaching are good planning, effective use of recall to consolidate learning, pitching work to meet the needs of pupils at different levels of attainment, and good development of language skills in many subjects. Number skills are taught satisfactorily. Past, and in some cases continuing, difficulties with the recruitment of teachers have caused slower progress for some pupils in some subjects. There has been a big improvement in the pupils' IT skills as a result of better teaching. Some teachers have insufficient knowledge of the individual targets for pupils with special educational needs. Some homework does not enable pupils to make the progress that they could make.

94% of teaching is satisfactory or better; 62% is good or better; 18% is very good or excellent. 6% of teaching is unsatisfactory. Most pupils understand their work and make good progress in acquiring new skills as a result of their good attitudes and concentration.



## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a satisfactory range of learning opportunities, although there are some weaknesses at Key Stage 4.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Overall provision is satisfactory, but targets for pupils' improvement need to be more specific and class teachers need to have and to use better information on the particular needs of pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes good provision overall. Provision for the pupils' moral development is good and that for their social development is very good. Provision for the pupils' cultural development has improved and is, along with arrangements for their spiritual development, satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides effective care for its pupils, providing a secure environment for learning.

The school works satisfactorily with the parents of its pupils, providing good information and enjoying a high level of parental approval for its work. There are some weaknesses in learning opportunities at Key Stage 4. Not all pupils take design and technology courses, as required by the National Curriculum. The compulsory short course in modern languages, although sometimes well taught, is at too low a level for many pupils. Several subjects make insufficient use of IT. Good guidance and support are provided for pupils. Insufficient use is made of information gained from the assessment of the pupils' work to modify schemes of work and lesson plans.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is well led. The headteacher provides strong leadership. The senior management team share the headteacher's vision of the school. Middle managers are mostly effective.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors discharge their responsibilities well and have a sound knowledge of the school's qualities. They have not, however, ensured compliance with all National Curriculum requirements.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school evaluates its performance well. It is creating a wide range of data and using this to evaluate standards and then plan for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	The school deploys its staff appropriately, has improved its accommodation and has mostly adequate learning resources.

There have been significant improvements in accommodation. There are insufficient books for pupils to take home in some subjects. The library is a very good facility.

The strengths in the leadership of the school are the emphasis on raising standards and on the accountability of departments. Educational goals are clear and consistently pursued.

The school applies the principles of best value when purchasing those services that it has the power to purchase. It is well administered with good financial planning.

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

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• They are satisfied with their children's progress and pleased that the school expects their children to work hard and do their best.</li><li>• A very high proportion are satisfied with the quality of teaching and the behaviour of the pupils.</li><li>• They judge the school to be well led and managed.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• About a quarter of parents who replied to the questionnaire think that the school could work more closely with parents and provide better information about their children's progress.</li></ul>

Inspectors confirm the parents' favourable views above. They do not agree with the minority of parents who express concern about the quality of the school's reporting on pupils' progress, which inspectors judge to be satisfactory.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Attainment in the Key Stage 3 Standard Assessment Tasks (SATs) and at GCSE in 1999 was average for the proportions of pupils reaching the thresholds of Level 5 for SATs and grades A\*-C in five or more subjects at GCSE – the levels by which national standards are set. When judged by the average point scores of all pupils, attainment was below the national average.

2. In the 1999 SATs the proportion of pupils achieving the expected Level 5 and higher was broadly in line with the national average in English and mathematics, but below average in science. The average point score of all pupils, having been above average in 1998, was below the national average in 1999 for all schools and well below that for similar schools. Over the last four years the school's overall results have been broadly in line with the national average, although those in science have been below the national average for both girls and boys. There was little difference by gender in 1999 from the national pattern. The trend in the school's results over the last four years has been erratic but broadly in line with the national trend, although there was a decline in 1999.

3. At GCSE in 1999 40% of pupils at Chafford achieved grades A\*-C in five or more subjects compared with 46% nationally. The school's results were broadly in line with the national average and with the average for similar schools. By contrast, the average points score of all pupils was below the national average, in part because some subjects (notably design and technology, business studies, geography and religious education) did not enter high proportions of pupils who had followed GCSE courses. These pupils left without any qualifications in these subjects, and their non-entrance contributed to the lowering of the school's overall points score. Differences by gender in overall attainment largely followed the national pattern in 1999.

4. There were variations in subject results at GCSE in 1999. Achievement in mathematics, taken by all but a few pupils, was outstandingly good with 62% achieving A\*-C grades compared with 44% nationally. These excellent results were a continuation of achievement in previous years. English results were much improved in 1999 and matched the national average. Results in double science were also close to the national average in 1999, although those for single science were poor. With an unusually high proportion of pupils entered for English literature, achievement matched the national average. Results in art, music and physical education (the last two with quite small entries) were excellent. The results in modern languages, with a lower entry than is found nationally, were very good in French in 1999 and very good in German in 1998, with no classes in 1999. Similarly, whilst some results in the design and technology subjects look individually impressive, a high proportion of pupils were not entered or took short GCSE courses, so that comparisons with national figures lack validity. For example, only six pupils were entered for the full course in resistant materials, with a further eleven entered for a short course, the total of 17 being an extraordinarily low figure for this subject. Results in the full IT course were below average and those in the short course were poor.

5. When attainment in a subject is compared with the average results of the same pupils in all of their other subjects, mathematics and art are seen to be achieving consistently better than other subjects. Science, geography and business studies are seen to be achieving consistently worse than other subjects.

6. The number of pupils prepared for GCSE courses but not then entered, and therefore leaving school without any certificated achievement, is a major weakness. The school had acknowledged this before the inspection and had established a policy to reduce the number from next summer onwards. The number of pupils studying history in the first place and then entered for the examination at GCSE is

much lower than is usually found.

7. The trend in GCSE results is upward for the proportion of pupils achieving grades A\*-C in five or more subjects, but downward for the average points score. This confirms that the school's concentration on raising standards by the criterion of A\*-C grades has been successful. The proportion of pupils achieving A\*-C grades in five or more subjects in 1994-5 was in the 30-33% range, compared with 40% in 1999. By this criterion, the school's results matched the national average for five or more A\*-C grades at GCSE in 1997 and again in 1999. In 1997 the school's average points score exceeded the national average, but the results in 1998 and 1999 did not sustain that achievement. The less able pupils did not make the same progress, and this has reduced the average points score based on all pupils' results. By this criterion the school has not achieved the upward trend over the last six years that has been achieved nationally.

8. A comparison of the Key Stage 3 SAT results in 1997 with the GCSE results of the same pupils in 1999 shows a similar pattern to that already described. When the criterion used is the proportion of A\*-C grades, the progress made over two years was above average in English, very high in mathematics (top 5% nationally), average in science and average overall. On the other hand, progress judged by the average points score or by the proportion achieving A\*-G grades in five or more subjects, which embraces all pupils and not just the more able, is well below average.

9. The pupils' current work is overall a little below average at Key Stage 3 and average at Key Stage 4. Attainment is highest in art and physical education. There is a very wide range of attainment in science. There is a considerable proportion of classes where attainment in modern languages is below average at Key Stage 4, as well as some where it is above average. Attainment in the compulsory short course in modern languages at Key Stage 4 is low for otherwise higher-attaining pupils. When provided with the highest quality of teaching, these pupils do well, but there is a wide spread of attainment in the classes and the certificate that is awarded is at a very low level. Many of these pupils are capable of achieving much more. The ablest pupils are not being challenged in mathematics at Key Stage 3 and could acquire a deeper understanding of mathematical principles. Otherwise, the abler pupils are making good progress. Pupils with special educational needs are making satisfactory progress.

10. Standards of literacy are satisfactory overall. The pupils' speaking and listening skills are good. Most can read well at a technical level and can participate effectively in all lessons. Abler pupils at Key Stage 4 are developing the higher reading skills of analysis, inference and an appreciation of nuance. Writing at Key Stage 4 is mostly above average, but there are weaknesses at Key Stage 3, including some very poor spelling. Number skills are mostly satisfactory, but mental number skills at Key Stage 4 are unsatisfactory and there is an over-use of calculators. IT skills are varied as a result of past staffing difficulties, but current teaching is enabling pupils to make a rapid recovery, and some are already working at an above average standard.

11. The targets set for GCSE results in 1999 were reached. Challenging targets have been set for the year 2000 GCSE results. Current attainment in Year 11 suggests that the target is achievable

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

12. The pupils' attitudes to school are good. Most pupils enjoy coming to school because they feel secure in a supportive, disciplined environment. They value the help provided by teachers and appreciate the range of activities and responsibilities offered. This confidence in school life enables them to make good progress in their learning.

13. The pupils' attitudes in lessons are good overall in all subjects and are very good in physical

education. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, show interest in their lessons, listen attentively to teachers and contribute their own ideas and opinions. They maintain concentration and often persevere with difficult tasks. They work well both independently and in small groups and respond enthusiastically to investigative tasks. Very occasionally in a few lessons, mainly in lower ability sets at Key Stage 4, a small minority of pupils lose interest and chatter.

14. Behaviour in the school is very good. Parents rightly appreciate the pupils' standards of behaviour and the improvements made since the introduction of the assertive discipline scheme. Pupils are polite, friendly and courteous and move around the school in an orderly and respectful way, particularly where there are narrow corridors. Behaviour in lessons is good or very good with only isolated examples of misbehaviour in science and design and technology. The incidence of permanent exclusions remains at a little below the national average. The number of fixed-term exclusions has continued to be high until very recently but has now been reduced significantly by the effective use of internal exclusion.

15. The pupils' personal development and relationships are very good and a strength of the school. A notable feature of school life is the high level of responsibility undertaken by pupils in all year groups. Representatives of all year groups take an active part in the assembly committee, currently very effectively led by a Year 11 pupil. A separate group of pupils organise the thought for the day to tutorial groups. Pupils in Year 8 carry out reception duty with maturity, write their own newsletter and run a drama club for Year 7. During the inspection, two Year 8 pupils were presented with a community award for showing initiative in helping at a road accident outside the school. There is an active school council. Pupils are confident that there is no racism in the school and that the occasional bullying is dealt with effectively, with the help of an anti-bullying committee run by Key Stage 4 pupils.

16. Attendance is satisfactory and improving. Attendance rates have been broadly in line with the national average in recent years, with unauthorised absence below average and authorised absence a little above. Since September, attendance has improved significantly and is currently just under 93% with only Year 9 slightly below 92%. Punctuality is good, both at the start of the school day and for lessons.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

17. Teaching is at least satisfactory in 94% of lessons. In 62% of all lessons teaching is good, very good or excellent. There was good or very good teaching in all subjects, particularly so in English, geography, information technology at Key Stage 4, physical education, and science at Key Stage 3. The unsatisfactorily taught lessons, except in one case, were spread amongst several teachers who otherwise taught satisfactorily or well.

18. The teachers have high levels of subject knowledge. Most teachers plan their lessons well, often with good introductions and lesson objectives shared with the pupils, complemented by checks for understanding during and at the end of the lessons. Another strong feature of the teaching is the frequent consolidation of the pupils' understanding, often by quick recall of previous learning at the start of lessons. This practice is also used to focus the pupils' minds on the work and get them into the right frame of mind for the work ahead. An example of this approach was a Year 9 English lesson on *Ozymandias*. In another English lesson, on ballad-writing, a standard routine of entering the class and immediately beginning silent reading whilst other pupils arrived also served the purpose of settling the group to work before the lesson objectives were outlined.

19. Most of the teachers have high expectations of their pupils, as shown in a listening exercise in a Year 8 French class, where the pupils were in only the second term of studying the language. Some teachers convey their high expectations by their vigorous teaching style that requires pupils to think and to complete tasks to deadlines. This was evident in a Year 11 science lesson on the eco-system. Some

excellent investigative approaches to learning are used, as in Year 10 religious education lessons, enabling pupils to marshal arguments and present their conclusions to the class. A strong feature of many lessons is that teachers pitch the work differently for pupils with different rates of progress. The school's general standard of behaviour and the effective control by teachers in their classrooms combine to ensure that pupils in all but a small number of lessons make satisfactory progress.

20. There is more promotion of high standards of literacy in classrooms than is often found in secondary schools. Many teachers routinely emphasise the correct spelling and pronunciation of key words in their subjects, insist on good note-making techniques and careful reading of instructions, and require good presentation of written work and oral contributions. There is some promotion of number skills in lessons other than mathematics.

21. Some teachers achieve a good balance between promoting good examination technique and allowing the pupils a fair measure of independence and self-reliance in their learning. This combination was seen in a Year 11 art class. In physical education lessons pupils of all ages routinely run their own warm-up sessions. Even when attainment is below average rather than high, as in a Year 11 drama lesson when pupils were working on presentations for their examination, the pupils were able successfully to evaluate their own work. The marking of pupils' work is generally helpful. It is good in geography, modern languages, physical education and in art, design and technology and information technology at Key Stage 4. The everyday assessment of pupils' work is unsatisfactory at Key Stage 3 in art and music.

22. A particular feature of two departments, English and physical education, is their response to concerns about the underachievement of one gender. Both departments have responded to this concern in the previous inspection report and successfully changed their teaching methods, subject matter or content to enable the underachieving gender to do better.

23. The school has had some difficulties in the past in recruiting teachers for some subjects. This has led to some resentment amongst older pupils about the number of food technology teachers that they have had, although the pupils are working quite well to reduce the impact of this and current teachers are doing their best to enable the pupils to recover lost ground. In information technology, where there have been staffing difficulties in the past, the present teacher is enabling Year 10 pupils to recover very quickly, and some pupils are working at a level that is well above the average for their age group.

24. There are a few weaknesses in teaching, other than those that caused lessons to be unsatisfactory overall. Some teachers lack knowledge about the individual education plans of pupils with special educational needs. Some homework consists of finishing class work, as an incentive to work harder in the lesson, but thus losing the opportunity for more independent working at home. Homework is not set in music at Key Stage 3. The highest-attaining pupils in mathematics at Key Stage 3 are not being sufficiently challenged, following the same (certainly successful) routines as other pupils, but not being given the greater understanding of which they are capable. Able pupils are not being taught at the right level in some of the compulsory short course classes in modern languages, because a low-level certificate of achievement is the expected outcome.

25. The generally good quality of teaching at both key stages is enabling pupils of varied attainment to make satisfactory progress. Standards of literacy are being raised. Standards in information technology are rising quite quickly from a previously low base. The key skills of subjects, as indicated by the National Curriculum, are being developed well in most subjects.

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

26. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum for most pupils at Key Stage 3, covering all the National Curriculum subjects and religious education. The school is disentangling itself from a policy to diversify the modern languages taught and from the consequences of staffing difficulties, with the result that the modern languages curriculum is different in each year, but currently satisfactory for most pupils except some taking the compulsory short course at Key Stage 4. In Year 7 there is no discrete drama and this has a detrimental effect on attainment by the end of the key stage. There are some equal opportunities issues. In Year 8 the pupils taking a second language miss one of their physical education lessons. Some pupils in the lowest mathematics set in Year 8 have missed one lesson per week for corrective reading, but arrangements have now been changed.

27. At Key Stage 4 the curriculum is satisfactory for many pupils, but there are weaknesses. Statutory requirements are not met for design and technology. There is no direct teaching of information technology for some pupils in Year 11, where standards are low. The school feels that it covers the National Curriculum programmes of study in Year 10, but there has been insufficient provision in Year 10 for all pupils to make satisfactory progress in developing their information technology skills by the end of the key stage. Until a recent change of policy, significant numbers of pupils have followed courses but not been entered for the GCSE examination in those subjects. The school is meeting statutory requirements in modern languages through a compulsory single lesson per week with the possibility of pupils selecting a GCSE short or long course in extra time. About two-thirds of the pupils take the compulsory course which for most leads to a Certificate of Achievement award, and this is not meeting the needs of many of these pupils. The pupils following a short and full GCSE course no longer share a lesson, an improvement since the last inspection. A recent improvement in response to criticism in the last inspection report is the amended curriculum followed by a group of pupils in Year 10, with a more vocational element provided by a day's work experience and a day at a local college per week.

28. Literacy has a high profile in the school and there is a good literacy policy. Strategies for teaching basic language skills are effective, with evidence of good progress in subjects such as history, religious education, physical education, geography and design and technology.

29. The pupils at both key stages are taught personal and social education (PSE) in adequate amounts of time and, although the quality of teaching is variable, with some good and one excellent lesson seen as well as some unsatisfactory lessons, it is satisfactory overall. The schemes of work in PSE have recently been revised. There is appropriate coverage of sex education and the misuse of drugs. The provision for careers education and guidance is good, with useful information readily accessible in the school library. The local community makes a very good contribution to the pupils' education. There are good academic links with local primary schools and colleges.

30. A wide range of activities is available to all pupils at lunchtime and after school, including revision clubs in most subjects. There are many opportunities for the pupils to participate in sport and many pupils do. At the time of the last inspection there were insufficient opportunities for the pupils to extend their learning through organised visits, field trips and language exchanges. This has improved and is satisfactory overall. There are good opportunities in some subjects such as English and geography, plans for a visit to France this year and penfriend schemes beginning in French and German, but no exchange visits and no gallery visits in art.

31. A key issue for improvement in the last inspection report was the use of information technology across the curriculum. There are some applications in many subjects and there is good use of

information technology to support the pupils' learning in design and technology and geography, with a good beginning made in modern languages. The school has not mapped the contributions made by each subject, and further development of this aspect of information technology is needed.

32. Schemes of work in many subjects have been recently revised and are still being rewritten in some. They are of satisfactory quality and most cater for the needs of pupils with special educational needs, an improvement since the last inspection. There is appropriate provision for most pupils with special educational needs. There has been an improvement in the monitoring of the curriculum, criticised at the last inspection. It is expected by the school that more frequent meetings between heads of departments and their line managers will provide better quality information for the monitoring of the curriculum.

33. Good opportunities are provided to promote pupils' personal development. The school expresses clear values and sets high expectations which it cultivates amongst its pupils.

34. Opportunities for spiritual development are satisfactory. The pupils are required to study various traditions and beliefs in religious education. A framework to encourage pupils to reflect, for example upon their own self-esteem and their attitudes towards learning and towards others in their group, is being introduced initially in Year 8. Although assemblies and tutor periods do not comply with the legal requirement for a daily act of collective worship, they do introduce themes of a religious and ethical nature. Those assemblies which are provided by pupils through their assembly committee are considered by some pupils to be particularly relevant. Responses to the world around us, including experiences of art and nature, are not sufficiently encouraged or explored within individual subject teaching.

35. Provision for moral education is good. There are examples in many subjects, including science, history and physical education, where pupils can move beyond simple rules of right and wrong to discuss the moral questions that arise within our own society and world-wide. All pupils take a short GCSE course in religious education that is based on moral issues. The PSE programme introduces pupils to aspects of behaviour and its impact upon society. Constructive policies to promote discipline and to deal with bullying are having a good impact on behaviour in general, leading to a perceptible improvement of learning in class.

36. Opportunities for social development are particularly good and a strength of the school. There are many ways in which pupils can exercise responsibility, including as receptionists and as prefects. The school council is an effective body which enables pupils to contribute to the development and success of the school community, and its impact and vitality are evident. Principles of fair play and co-operation are evident in many lessons. The school is an orderly and secure place in which pupils can both learn and develop personal relationships.

37. Cultural education has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. The ways in which subjects now raise the pupils' awareness of various cultures has been reviewed. Good examples seen include the study of our industrial heritage, the works of important dramatists and the impact of religious traditions upon their communities. The number of visits to places of interest and the use of artists in residence are now significant and these help to enrich many pupils' learning. In art, music, geography and religious education, the curriculum introduces aspects of non-western cultures. Apart from this, however, there are too few planned opportunities, either in lessons or outside, for pupils to experience and understand the arts and societies of non-European countries and the multi-ethnic character of the pupils' own British society.

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

38. The school provides effective care for its pupils. It is a secure environment in which pupils can



learn and make progress in both their academic and personal development.

39. Arrangements for the pupils' welfare, health and safety are satisfactory and those for child protection are good. Staff with whole-school responsibilities in this area have a good awareness of the risks and issues involved, and have drawn up satisfactory procedures for dealing with them. There are occasional lapses in the implementation of procedures in design and technology and physical education. The school is very thorough in ensuring that all equipment is regularly inspected and that any defects are swiftly remedied. Care is taken to ensure that pupils with physical disabilities have full access to the building and site. The designated teacher for child protection is experienced, keeps up to date with local procedures and makes sure that all staff are aware of what to do in the event of disclosure. Pupils are helped to look after themselves and develop a responsible attitude through lessons in PSE and drama.

40. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good. The school uses a range of assessment measures to monitor pupils' progress. A computerised system enables the pupils' academic progress to be tracked. It collates and analyses data and predicts GCSE grades related to scores at Key Stage 2 and 3. The database is regularly used to analyse individual and group performance. Comparisons are made, for instance, at the end of key stages in relation to attainment on entry and the performance of boys compared to girls. The outcomes of such analyses are presented to heads of department, but insufficient and inconsistent use is made of this data for target-setting and monitoring by some departments. The exception is physical education where assessment is well developed. There is evidence of small pockets of good practice within science, in modern foreign languages at Key Stage 3 and in English and art at Key Stage 4. Overall, the use of assessment information to inform curriculum planning is unsatisfactory. Assessment is unsatisfactory at Key Stage 3 in music, art and history. Art and music assessments are not soundly based on evidence. The end of Key Stage 3 grades in history are inaccurate because they are not based on sufficient evidence of pupils' performance in the full range of skills.

41. Pupils with special educational needs are identified and assessed correctly. Pupils who require additional support are identified from information supplied by primary schools, the results of end of Key Stage 2 SATs and the results of standardised tests administered in Year 7. Teachers also obtain information, through visits to the primary schools, in the year before pupils enter the school. Individual education plans are prepared in accordance with the Code of Practice, but the plans tend to be general in nature and not always translated into targets that are subject-specific and measurable.

42. Since the last inspection the school has made some progress in developing its assessment policy, but there are still some weaknesses. The assessment process has been successfully linked with tests and other data to enable tracking of departments and individual pupils to be done. This has yet to have an impact in some departments. Although the school is promoting good procedures for assessing the pupils' attainment and progress, departments are at very different stages of implementing them.

43. The school has very effective procedures for monitoring and improving attendance. These have been demonstrably successful in the last few months which have seen attendance rates rise by 2%. This success is based on a rigorous approach which permeates the school and on the allocation of responsibility to the deputy heads of year who are able to concentrate on this aspect of their work.

44. The school has very effective measures to monitor and promote good behaviour. The merit system is much valued by pupils in all years and motivates the vast majority of them to work hard and behave well. The introduction of the internal exclusion unit has been very successful in eliminating disruptive behaviour from classrooms, and at the same time ensuring that those pupils who breach school rules can continue their education in a highly disciplined and supervised environment. The school works very well with the borough's behaviour support service which provides individual support and counselling to

pupils with behavioural and emotional difficulties.

45. The school provides effective educational and personal support and guidance which is helping to raise pupils' achievements. Good arrangements are in place to help Year 7 pupils to settle into the school. For example the head of Year 7 teaches science to primary pupils in one of the school's laboratories and Year 8 pupils act as very effective mentors. From Year 8 onwards, pastoral teams stay with their year groups and so get to know individual pupils and their families very well. They are starting to use the developing systems for tracking pupils' academic progress to devise various methods of raising achievement. These strategies make the most impact in Year 11 where almost all pupils now have an adult mentor either from within the school or from the business community. Parents particularly appreciate the extra support and revision classes provided for pupils as they approach their GCSE examinations.

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

46. Parents show a high level of satisfaction with the school. They are particularly pleased about the way in which the school helps their children to work hard, make good progress, behave well and become mature and responsible. They appreciate the good teaching and management in the school. The school lives up to the expectations of the vast majority of the parents and the local community, as demonstrated by the fact that it is oversubscribed and some parents can only obtain places for their children by going to appeal.

47. Overall, the school's links with parents and the impact of their involvement on children's learning are satisfactory. The school provides good information in the prospectus and regular newsletters about school life. Its procedures for keeping parents informed about their children's achievements are based on annual and interim reports, consultation evenings and letters from the headteacher, deputy heads and heads of year about pupils' achievements and misdemeanours. Annual reports give satisfactory information about strengths and weaknesses in pupils' attainment and are developing well to include National Curriculum levels and targets. A few parents comment that communication within the school is not always effective, particularly regarding pupils with special educational needs. The school aims to respond to parents' queries within two days, but there are occasions when messages get lost, especially if they are reliant on pupils passing on letters. Parent governors provide a useful additional channel of communication.

48. The school encourages parents to become involved in the life of the school and their children's learning, but does not always meet with a good response. There is an active parent-teacher association run by a small committee which raises useful funds for the school and is consulted by the headteacher over matters such as homework, the home-school agreement and school uniform. Parents and ex-parents play a strong role on the Governing Body, and the school has no difficulty in filling parent governor vacancies. A small number of parents and ex-parents help in the school, particularly in the learning support department; however, few parents responded to the invitation to help their children develop reading skills as part of the literacy initiative.

49. In their responses to the inspection questionnaire, a significant minority of parents indicated that they do not feel that the school works closely with them and do not feel well informed about how their child is getting on. The inspection team did not find a justification for this view. Before the inspection, the school had already planned to survey the attitudes of parents and explore in more depth what they want so that it can make further efforts to meet their needs.

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

50. The school is strongly led and directed by the headteacher, supported by a very experienced chair

of governors and senior staff. All have a strong focus on raising standards, as do the largely effective middle managers. Much analysis of data takes place to assess the attainment of pupils when admitted to the school. This information is used to assist individual pupils and the school as a whole to achieve at a higher level. Much attention is given to the promotion of more effective teaching, and the consequence of this work is evident in the high proportion of good teaching and low proportion of unsatisfactory teaching found during the inspection. Monitoring of the school's work, even though it has needed quite a strong drive from management, has proved compatible with the maintenance of effective relationships.

51. The Governing Body includes people who both represent the community that the school serves and have expertise relevant to their work. The chair of governors represents continuity in the school, having been in office for many years. There is a high level of both delegation to and accountability from the committees of the governing body. The governors are knowledgeable about the school's strengths and weaknesses. Some weaknesses in curriculum planning have not been tackled, for example in modern languages at Key Stage 4, and the governors have not ensured that the National Curriculum is followed for design and technology at Key Stage 4. There are also omissions from the governors' annual report to parents.

52. The planning of the school's development has been much improved since the last inspection. There is now a closer relationship between planning at school and at departmental levels, with regular discussions between senior managers and heads of subject departments. Weaknesses remain in departmental planning in music and art. The school's priorities are correct for its needs, and high targets have been set for increases in the number of pupils achieving A\*-C grades at GCSE, and in attendance levels. The school also listens to its parents, pupils and staff when planning developments. The creation of procedures for internal exclusion to reduce the number of fixed-term exclusions is an outcome from such consideration.

53. The school has formally adopted the principles of best value and applies them when purchasing services that it has the power to purchase. The accounts are now well maintained. The finance committee of the Governing Body receives adequate information to carry out its duty to determine the budget and monitor expenditure. End-of-year balances, that have also served as contingency funds, have been at a reasonable level, with no greater fluctuation than has been necessary. The balance on the current year is running at less than 3% of the total. Ear-marked funding is appropriately used. The school uses its resources appropriately and effectively and is providing good value for money.

54. The number, qualifications and experience of teaching and other classroom staff match the demands of the curriculum in most subjects. There have been long-term staffing difficulties in the technology department, and to a lesser extent in English, which are having adverse effects on standards. There is an established professional development review scheme, which caters for all staff. There is a comprehensive induction programme for new staff, and newly qualified teachers are well supported. Spending on training is effectively related to needs identified through staff review interviews. Training attended by staff is evaluated and followed up at a later date to assess the desired impact upon the quality of education. The school has recently gained Investors in People accreditation.

55. Overall, accommodation is satisfactory. The accommodation enables all areas of the curriculum to be taught effectively and provides a satisfactory environment for learning. Improvements have been made since the last inspection within the budgetary constraints, for example, repainting of the exterior of the school, refurbishment of the science laboratories and the construction of additional rooms in the entrance hall. Specialist accommodation for physical education is good. Overall, the standard of decor is good, but this is not the case in the community sports centre which the school uses. In science, although accommodation is satisfactory, some laboratories are in need of refurbishment. The last inspection reported that music accommodation was unsatisfactory; it is now much better. Since the last

inspection the school has made satisfactory improvements to its accommodation.

56. Learning resources are satisfactory overall; however, in some subjects there are insufficient textbooks for pupils to take home. The level of computer provision has improved and there is a satisfactory ratio of pupils to computers of 7:1. The school has a very-well managed library, which offers a wide range of books, periodicals, newspapers, CD-ROMs, and computers. A school minibus has recently been bought with a big contribution from the parent-teacher association.

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

57. The school is in a strong position to remedy the few weaknesses noted during the inspection and to enhance its policies to raise attainment. It should now:

- (1) improve the assessment of pupils' attainment in history, art and music at Key Stage 3, so that judgements are soundly based on National Curriculum descriptions or levels, (paras 40, 92, 112, 127)  
and ensure that the results of assessment are used in all subjects at both key stages to amend schemes of work and lesson plans; (para 40)
- (2) ensure that the improvements made in special educational needs are continued, so that targets are more precise and are used more routinely in classrooms, and the Year 10 learning skills course is improved; (paras 59 and 61)
- (3) use the forthcoming curriculum review to remedy weaknesses in the curriculum by:
  - ensuring that all pupils at Key Stage 4 follow a design and technology course (paras 27 and 97)
  - facing the fundamental weaknesses in provision for modern languages at Key Stage 4, where pupils on the compulsory course are taught in classes with a very wide range of attainment for one lesson a week, and prepared for a certificate that is well below the level of which many are capable (paras 9, 24, 27, 120)

### **ASSESSMENT OF PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

58. The good features of the provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) noted in the last inspection report have been maintained. There is early and thorough identification of pupils' needs through the Key Stage 2 national test results and additional information received at the time of transfer from primary schools. The results of standardised tests, administered when pupils arrive in the school, contribute to decisions about the composition of teaching groups and which pupils will receive additional support in literacy through the corrective reading programme. The latter is working well but because it has been introduced very recently there is little concrete evidence of pupils' progress as a direct result of the programme.

59. The assessment of pupils with statements is also carried out thoroughly and pupils receive the support to which they are entitled. The Code of Practice is administered correctly and the register is updated regularly, ensuring that pupils move up or down the register as their needs change. Information on the pupils is compiled carefully and disseminated widely. For instance, a pen picture of all pupils on the register is distributed to heads of subject departments. This is revised approximately every year. An update on pupils with behavioural difficulties is distributed weekly to all departments.

Individual education plans (IEPs) are written to the local education authority's format for all pupils with a statement. A shortened version, intended to be more helpful to teachers, is written for all others at stage 2 and above. The latter are drafted by the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCo) after consultation with subject teachers and the pupils themselves. Pupils display these summary IEPs in the front of their books or folders. The targets and methods outlined on the IEPs are often too general to be of real help to teachers. Most teachers are aware of which pupils are on the register, and to a lesser extent their learning difficulties, but this is not always translated into teaching methods adapted to meet their specific needs. This shortcoming has not been overcome since the last inspection.

60. The pupils enjoy a good level of support in lessons. Learning support assistants (LSAs) provide an appropriate balance between close assistance to individuals and wider involvement with other pupils needing help. When there is good collaboration between the teacher and the LSA, and the latter is well informed about the activities taking place in the classroom, pupils make satisfactory and often good progress. In most cases LSAs know enough about pupils' particular needs to help them to learn, and as a consequence they are able to contribute to the good teaching from which most pupils benefit; however, the LSAs are not always well briefed, and on too many occasions their time is not used efficiently because the nature of the classroom activity means that they are redundant for much, and in some cases all, of the lesson.

61. The curriculum is organised in a way which gives SEN pupils the same access to subjects as other pupils. The setting and banding arrangements generally work well, allowing the lowest-attaining pupils to be taught together as a class in some subjects. The arrangement for a group in Year 10, identified as likely to benefit from a course which gives them a mixture of school, college and work experience, is working well. A small group of pupils in both Years 10 and 11 have a slightly reduced GCSE examination programme and receive learning support in place of one subject. The Year 11 programme is sharply focused on their needs; it is taught very effectively and does much to supplement the work done in other subjects. The learning skills programme designed for Year 10 lacks the same degree of rigour and is unhelpful to pupils, partly because the teacher in charge of the course does not have the expertise to deal with the pupils' special educational needs.

62. Good administrative systems contribute to the management of SEN provision. There are, however, significant weaknesses because insufficient monitoring takes place to check the effectiveness of the procedures and intended methods, and the progress that pupils are making. The SENCo is not allocated sufficient non-teaching time to carry out these duties and to oversee adequately the work of the LSAs. The LSAs are disadvantaged because they do not have a permanent base from which they can work. The role of the second in the SEN department is unclear. While in-school provision for the talented and most able pupils does not extend beyond club activities, pupils attend subject courses at borough level on a regular basis.

## **COMMUNITY LINKS**

63. The school has established a very wide range of links with the community and these make a significant contribution to the pupils' education and personal development. These links have a particularly strong impact on environmental and citizenship education. The school is involved in several landscaping and recycling projects which give to pupils the opportunity to work with artists, architects and environmentalists on improving the school grounds, the garden of a local retirement home and local features such as a reclaimed gravel pit. There are very good links with the local Member of Parliament who visits the school frequently to answer questions about his work and who has received groups of pupils at the House of Commons.

64. Representatives of the local churches are also frequent visitors to the school and make an important contribution to assemblies and religious education lessons. The local curate and his wife have arranged

for the school to have a valuable link with Gambia. The new co-ordinator for PSE has established a coherent programme of external speakers, who have a considerable effect on the provision and quality of health and safety education. Good links with professional people and external agencies also enrich the curriculum in English, science, physical education, geography, business studies, the performing arts and food technology.

65. The school has good links with local businesses which enable it, for example, to offer work experience placements to all Year 11 pupils, to give older pupils the chance to run a branch of a national bank at the school, and to provide external mentors for a selected group of Year 11 pupils at risk of underachieving against the 5 A\*-C GCSE criterion. Other business links are used to augment the school's resources, usually through sponsorship. The school has strong ties with its three main partner primary schools which greatly assist the transition process for pupils coming to the school.

66. The school is very much a part of its local community, as seen in the annual Havering half marathon and fun run event which is organised by the school and a local employer and raises thousands of pounds for local and national charities, as well as the school. Pupils undertake further community and charity work throughout the year; for example, the sponsorship committee of the school council raises funds for a child in the Gambia and for refugees. Links with post-16 colleges are sound and developing. The school is a centre for adult education locally but this is carried out largely as a separate activity.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	189
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	72

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	16	44	32	6	0	0

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

### *Information about the school's pupils*

#### **Pupils on the school's roll**

Number of pupils on the school's roll	853
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	116

#### **Special educational needs**

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	36
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	258

#### **English as an additional language**

Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3
---	---

#### **Pupil mobility in the last school year**

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	27

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	8.7
National comparative data	7.9

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	1.1

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

### *Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3*

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		1999	93	79

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 5 and above	Boys	45	59	42
	Girls	55	49	37
	Total	100	108	79
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	School	58 (74)	63 (64)	46 (62)
	National	63 (64)	62 (60)	55 (58)
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 6 or above	School	18 (44)	27 (36)	10 (34)
	National	28 (34)	38 (36)	23 (27)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 5 and above	Boys	41	60	42
	Girls	53	49	38
	Total	94	109	80
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	School	55	64	47
	National	64	64	60
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 6 or above	School	18	27	11
	National	31	37	28

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



***Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4***

Number of 15-year-olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	75	63	138

GCSE results		5 or more grades A*-C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	27	61	70
	Girls	28	54	60
	Total	55	115	130
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	40 (35)	83 (82)	94 (95)
	National	46.3 (44.6)	90.7 (89.8)	95.7 (94.6)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	30 (29)
	National	37.8 (36.8)

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

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

	No. of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	5
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	3
Indian	15
Pakistani	6
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	0
White	818
Any other minority ethnic group	4

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

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	5	1
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	59	1
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

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

#### **Qualified teachers and classes:**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	50.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.9

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Education support staff:**

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	261

#### **Deployment of teachers:**

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	70.0%
---	-------

#### **Average teaching group size:**

Key Stage 3	26.4
Key Stage 4	20.8

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1998-99
----------------	---------

	£
Total income	£2,147,784
Total expenditure	£2,115,844
Expenditure per pupil	£2,580
Balance brought forward from previous year	£113,444
Balance carried forward to next year	£145,384

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

**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	853
Number of questionnaires returned	173

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	36	56	5	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	48	46	5	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	37	54	5	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	56	13	3	1
The teaching is good.	31	61	5	1	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	28	47	20	4	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	43	43	9	2	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	39	5	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	24	49	22	3	3
The school is well led and managed.	32	58	6	1	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	34	58	4	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	36	50	9	3	2

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

### **ENGLISH**

67. Overall attainment in English is broadly in line with national averages. In 1999, the average points score in the Key Stage 3 Standard Assessment Tasks (SATs) was just below the national average, but in line with that of similar schools. The proportion of pupils reaching Level 5 and higher, was close to the national average but the proportion reaching Level 6 and higher was below the national average and below that for similar schools. Results in English were similar to those for the other two core subjects on the basis of the average points score. They were similar to those in mathematics and better than those in science when compared on the basis of pupils achieving Level 5 or higher. Looking at the trend in results over time, the average points score since 1996 has shown a slight rise, broadly in line with national improvements. What has been significant is the rate of improvement seen in boys' results.

68. There was a general improvement in the GCSE English and English literature results from 1998 to 1999, with the 1999 results close to national averages both in terms of A\*-C percentages and average point scores. The GCSE English results were in line with those in similar schools. There was again a noticeable improvement in boys' results in both GCSE English and English literature in 1999. In spite of these improvements, however, pupils entered for both English and English literature performed significantly worse in these subjects than in the average of all their other subjects, although strict comparisons are made difficult by the non-entry of weaker pupils in some other subjects.

69. These generally satisfactory results are reflected in the work seen during the inspection. Pupils in Key Stage 3 lessons have good standards of speaking and listening. Most speak with confidence, often contributing their ideas in some detail, and listen attentively to each other and to their teachers. Many read aloud fluently. Their comprehension is good, often as a result of their teacher's effective questioning techniques. Well-completed reading records by pupils in a Year 8 class showed detailed responses to a wide range of private reading and reflected the success of the emphasis given by the department to developing pupils' interest in reading. Standards of writing show some variation. High-attaining pupils write well in a variety of styles, have good analytical skills and produce imaginative creative work. Others are helped to plan their work by structured worksheets and by the use of writing frames. Only a few lower-attaining pupils have difficulty in writing accurately at length. In Key Stage 4 lessons, pupils frequently make acute observations, ask perceptive questions and give detailed responses to their teacher's questions. There is a high level of participation from boys in this respect. Reading aloud is generally very fluent and pupils' comprehension is frequently good. All develop the skills of note-making and of paying close attention to text. Many pupils show self-assurance in their writing; there is much that is lively and interesting. In lower ability bands most pupils show a clear personal response in their writing, but their essays are not always in appropriate style. Above average progress is made by pupils as they move through the key stage, as a result of their teachers' high expectations. Detailed analytical marking gives to pupils a clear idea of their strengths and weaknesses and where they need to improve. The teachers' good subject knowledge and awareness of examination requirements help pupils in their preparation for their GCSEs. The improvement in boys' achievements is partly due to their teachers' very firm classroom management, to the fact that lessons are conducted with good humour at a good pace, and to a deliberate choice of texts that appeal to boys. All these features helped to produce the good working atmosphere seen in a Year 11 lesson on *Animal Farm* in which the boys' progress was particularly noticeable. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress at both key stages. They are given challenging work and well-structured lessons with a variety of activities that break down learning into manageable steps.

70. Literacy has a high profile in the school. The literacy policy is well-embedded in practice and there are detailed measures to monitor its effectiveness. There is a reference to the need to develop literacy in the schemes of work of most departments, good presentation is encouraged, and in most subjects pupils are taught the spelling of subject-specific vocabulary. Standards of literacy are generally at least satisfactory and often good. In a Year 7 geography class on the siting of settlements, the pupils' oral skills were fostered by group presentations and role play. Good listening skills are noted in many subjects: physical education and design technology in particular. Most pupils' reading skills are sufficient to cope with the demands of the curriculum and there is some good development of note-making techniques in subjects such as geography and design technology. Much writing is generally accurate at Key Stage 4; there are more weaknesses noted at Key Stage 3. Teachers provide varied and imaginative approaches to writing in history, religious education and geography, but few other subjects offer many opportunities to write at length. In some English lessons at Key Stage 3, teachers make use of strategies from the Key Stage 2 literacy hour to improve both reading comprehension and writing skills.

71. Good and frequently very good teaching is a strength of work in English. Pupils make good progress as a result of very well-planned lessons. Pupils are told very clearly what they should be learning at the beginning of lessons and they come to lessons expecting to work hard. The silent reading session at the beginning of lessons at Key Stage 3 helps to create a calm working atmosphere with younger pupils. A good pace is maintained in all lessons, and pupils as a result work productively. They are helped by well-designed tasks and good resources. Teachers use a variety of methods to consolidate learning at the end of lessons, engaging the pupils in contributions to this process. All of these features were seen in many lessons, but particularly in a successful Year 8 lesson on ballads, in which pupils benefited from the teacher's enthusiasm and gained a secure understanding of the ballad form as well as a sound basis for writing their own. Very good attitudes and behaviour on the pupils' part help to contribute to their progress in lessons and over time. They show interest during lessons, contributing original ideas and opinions, and often generating their own questions. They usually maintain concentration and often persevere with challenging tasks.

72. The management of the department has contributed to the improvements in the pupils' achievements in English. There is in place a sound system for monitoring and supporting work in the department which includes observation of teaching and staff development reviews. There is an ethos in which discussion about teaching and learning is encouraged and a reflective approach which is continually seeking improvement. There is a recognition that work is still to be done to make assessment at Key Stage 3 more specific and to develop a system for monitoring pupils' progress in line with the school's.

73. The department has been successful in overcoming the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection report. Since the last inspection, there has been a greater focus on attainment, and both SAT and GCSE results have improved. There have been improvements to the IT curriculum, particularly at Key Stage 3. The achievements of boys have improved, as a result partly of the change from setting to banding, partly of a strengthening of the reward system to improve motivation, and partly of the practices already described. There have also been general improvements in standards of reading.

## **DRAMA**

74. Drama is taught as a discrete subject but comes under the umbrella of the English department. Standards of drama at both key stages are below national expectations, and there has been a sharp decline in GCSE drama results since 1997, when the A\*-C percentage was well above the national average. In 1999 the results were well below the national average, with boys significantly underachieving. The pupils' behaviour and attitudes are generally satisfactory, but their basic drama skills are poor. This is not helped by the lack of drama lessons in Year 7. Teaching in drama is at least

satisfactory, with some good lessons, but insufficient attention is given at Key Stage 3 to providing opportunities for pupils to develop analytical skills through the evaluation of their own and others' performances. It has been recognised that the emphasis in the drama curriculum at Key Stage 3 needs to be changed, and in fact some re-writing of schemes of work with a clearer focus on skill development has already taken place. At present many drama lessons at Key Stage 3 serve to develop the pupils' understanding of social issues, but do little to improve attainment in drama.

## **MATHEMATICS**

75. The proportion of pupils who achieved Level 5 and above in the 1999 SATs was in line with the national average; however, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 6 and above was below average. Overall results, taking the average points score achieved, were below average and well below the average of similar schools. These results have fluctuated over the last few years, reaching a high point in 1998. They were broadly similar in 1999 to those reported at the last inspection. There has been no significant pattern to any variation in performance by gender. The results in mathematics in 1999 were similar to those for the other two core subjects on the basis of the average points score. They were similar to those in English and better than science when compared on the basis of pupils achieving Level 5 or higher.

76. Results in mathematics at GCSE have consistently been among the best in the school. They have been consistently well above the national average since the last inspection. Results in 1999 showed a slight improvement over 1998. GCSE results are very high in comparison with similar schools. The progress of the most recent group of pupils to sit GCSE in mathematics was very good when compared to the results they achieved in the 1997 Key Stage 3 SATs. Considerable value is being added at Key Stage 4. The targets set were met and those for summer 2000 require an improvement over results in 1999.

77. The mathematics department has been successful in enabling pupils to achieve excellent results at GCSE, usually above those achieved elsewhere in the school. It has adopted successful teaching methods and pupils are expected to do well. Much of what the department does is good. In spite of this success there is a commitment to raising standards further and to this end there are some aspects that can be improved.

78. The standards currently being achieved by pupils reflect the results both at Key Stage 3 and GCSE across all aspects of mathematics, although there are more pupils in Year 11 who are on target to achieve at least a grade C at GCSE than in 1999. Most pupils are achieving as expected at Key Stage 3, although there are some aspects of their mathematical understanding, particularly of the higher-attaining pupils, that are under-developed. Pupils, particularly the ablest, are not sufficiently engaged in discussions in lessons to establish what they understand and the methods, successful or otherwise, that they use when calculating. This weakness was pointed out in the last inspection report and has not been effectively tackled. Teachers are good at teaching mathematical skills and techniques. Clear explanations and some good direct teaching, with pupils given plenty of practice of routine questions, enable them to consolidate new skills and to be able to repeat them. This enables pupils in middle and lower sets to make good progress. It also enables the higher-attaining pupils to achieve well, but not in all cases as well as they could do if greater attention were given to the points made above.

79. Other methods are being introduced in some classrooms to tackle the need to deepen pupils' mathematical understanding. Many positive features were observed during the excellent teaching of a Year 7 top set. The lesson began with a task to sharpen and develop the multiplication of decimals. Pupils were encouraged to use the method with which they felt most comfortable and then demonstrate this to the class. This was clearly an approach that the pupils were accustomed to using. This was followed by an activity using dice to enable pupils to apply their understanding of both fractions and

the mean of a set of values to the strategy required in a simple game. Some very effective direct teaching then showed pupils how to calculate the arithmetical mean from a frequency table. Explanations were clear and questions used effectively to assess whether pupils had understood some of the difficult aspects of the technique. Pupils then had the opportunity to try their hand at answering a question before a final plenary session that was used skilfully to assess the extent of the pupils' learning. The pupils consolidated and learnt new concepts and skills rapidly, and remained interested and enthused throughout the lesson.

80. Standards of numeracy are satisfactory overall. They are stronger at Key Stage 3 than at Key Stage 4. Pupils calculate accurately with whole numbers but are often taught one particular method rather than being encouraged to look for alternatives. Mental recall of number facts is weaker than the accuracy of the written methods used at Key Stage 4, with pupils relying too heavily on the calculator. Mental recall is sharper at Key Stage 3. The speed of mental recall is being improved by the use of speed tests; however, some teachers are relying on mental tests as a means of improving skills rather than teaching methods that pupils might use to increase accuracy and confidence. In some of the better lessons the teachers encourage pupils to discuss the methods that they use. This serves to deepen their understanding and confidence, and the accuracy of their work. A numeracy policy is being developed and staff have received additional training. A wider range of methods and activities is needed, particularly at Key Stage 3, to develop pupils' number skills and their application to problems, which will build upon their experiences in the daily mathematics lesson at primary school.

81. Almost half of the teaching is good or better with a considerable proportion being very good or excellent; however, there is unsatisfactory teaching in a very small number of lessons exclusively at Key Stage 3. These figures are similar to those at the last inspection. Teachers have generated a purposeful working atmosphere in their classrooms. Pupils are expected to work hard. Most respond well and put a considerable effort into their work, learning to repeat the skills and techniques that they have been taught.

82. Standards at GCSE have remained high since the last inspection, but have shown little change at Key Stage 3. Some of the areas for development at the last inspection have been tackled, such as improving the schemes of work; however, the department has only responded slowly to the need to broaden the teaching methods, particularly for higher-attaining Key Stage 3 pupils. The work of the department is monitored with an emphasis on improving GCSE results by identifying more pupils in lower sets who could achieve a grade C and pushing them to reach it. Teaching methods need to be broadened at Key Stage 3, without losing the strengths of the teaching that ensure the success that the department already achieves.

## **SCIENCE**

83. Results in the Key Stage 3 SATs in 1999 were below the national average and those achieved in similar schools. The average points score was similar to those in the other core subjects. Results have been erratic over the last four years, although they fell in 1999 to be broadly in line with those at the time of the previous inspection. The performance of boys and girls over this four-year period has been similar. The proportion of pupils achieving A\*-C grades at GCSE in 1999 was below the national average but in line with similar schools. The performance of pupils in science in 1999 was significantly below the average of all their other subjects. The comparative performance of boys was worse than that of the girls. Nevertheless attainment at GCSE in 1999 was above that at the time of the last inspection. The progress made by pupils based on their Key Stage 3 SAT results was also in line with that in similar schools.

84. A wide range of attainment is evident in lessons at both key stages. Overall, attainment is broadly in line with that expected. This is higher than the recent results in SATs and GCSE would suggest.

Many pupils in Year 9, for example, have a good appreciation of the position and movement of particles and higher-attaining pupils are able to apply their ideas to explain dissolving and diffusion. Similarly, many pupils in Year 11 understand the simple properties of waves, with higher-attaining pupils explaining observations such as the diffraction of light. The verbal response of many pupils, particularly when replying to effective questioning by their teacher, is stronger than in their writing. The department is developing a good range of methods to encourage more specific answers and this is helping to raise standards. There was, for example, a good emphasis on examination technique in a Year 11 lesson on waves. The emphasis that teachers often place on the understanding and use of technical language is also encouraging pupils to provide specific answers to questions. This was evident in a Year 9 lesson using ideas on particles to explain diffusion and dissolving. Most pupils also have secure basic skills including literacy and numeracy and these are sufficiently developed to give access to their work. Attainment in experimental and investigative science has improved since the last inspection. The use of information technology has also improved, with, for example, the requirement built into schemes of work for all pupils in Key Stage 4 to collect and analyse physical data electronically.

85. Teaching is now good at both key stages. This aspect has also improved since the previous inspection. There is a high proportion of good and very good teaching in individual lessons. Occasionally teaching is unsatisfactory as a result of some pupils' attitudes and behaviour being insufficiently challenged. More generally pupils are well managed and relationships are good. The teachers now provide good continuity for pupils, as in a Year 11 lesson on photosynthesis, by reviewing previous lessons and building carefully on their existing knowledge and understanding. As a result, the pupils' knowledge and understanding are more secure, and good progress from one lesson to another is ensured. The examples and contexts used to help the pupils to understand key aspects are well chosen from common and everyday experiences. At other times, as in a Year 11 lesson exploring the sea as an ecosystem, topical and interesting contexts are used to encourage the pupils to apply their ideas to new contexts. The marking of work has also improved and is now at least satisfactory, with some clearly having a beneficial impact on the pupils' motivation and attainment.

86. In response to this good teaching most pupils make a good effort with their work and remain focused on the task set. They are productive and work at a good pace. They know what they have to do and get on with it quickly and effectively. A minority of pupils lack confidence and initiative and require more support from the teacher to work effectively. The disaffection noted in some Key Stage 4 lessons in the previous report has largely been removed.

87. There has been good progress in responding to the issues identified in the previous report, as a result of effective leadership in the department which has made its work more effective in raising standards. There is a clear recognition that attainment in examinations remains below that possible and of the need to continue to raise standards. These developments are increasingly securely based, using the outcomes of the monitoring of pupils' work and classroom practice to focus planning.

## **ART**

88. The GCSE examination results have been well above the national average for several years. This was also the case in 1999 when 84% of the pupils achieved an A\*-C grade against the national figure of 61%. The proportion gaining the highest grade was twice the national average. In the last three years, the pupils have done significantly better in art than in the average of all their other subjects. Boys and girls do equally well.

89. The majority of Key Stage 3 pupils know how to use a range of techniques, and from the beginning of Year 7 they gain confidence in dealing with the processes associated with two and three-dimensional work. The projects presented across the key stage are demanding and require pupils to know and



understand art, as well as draw, paint and make artefacts; in this respect the National Curriculum requirements are met. Good quality work on display, and work in progress, shows that pupils understand artistic style. For example, Year 7 pupils studying cubism can use their research, and what they are told by teachers, when drawing portraits. Across the key stage, pupils are encouraged to take an imaginative approach. This is much stronger than their technical ability. The projects are well conceived but the learning intentions need to be more explicit, and some need a greater emphasis on the development of key skills. For instance, Year 9 pupils working on a suspense theme had good ideas about how to give a storyline visual impact but often their weak technical skills lowered the overall quality of the work. Despite some shortcomings, attainment is in line with expectations by the end of the key stage.

90. The work of the current cohort of pupils reflects the high standards achieved in the past. Pupils demonstrate sound technical skills and very good expressive skills. They have a firm understanding of the requirements of the examination course because these are promoted well by teachers. From an early stage, pupils understand the significance and importance of research, and they can communicate their ideas effectively after experimenting and then refining their work. For instance, pupils in Year 10 had produced very strong, large-scale pastel drawings after working from observation of familiar objects. The images had been manipulated very successfully, resulting in visually exciting finished pieces of work. Year 11 classes were seen refining a range of projects before submitting them for examination. Their work, in both two and three dimensions, was generally lively and imaginative, showing that they had improved their ability to work from a stimulus and realise their intentions. Over the two-year course they gain a secure understanding of the work of established artists, and importantly, how this information can be used to influence their own work.

91. Pupils have good attitudes to the subject. They respond very well to their teachers' expectations that they become independent learners. The vast majority are interested in the projects. They concentrate, persevere and enjoy working imaginatively. Teaching is satisfactory overall and stronger at Key Stage 4, where the GCSE criteria form a solid framework in which teachers can teach and pupils can learn. A Year 10 lesson was particularly successful because the need for decisions to be documented was an underlying feature, as pupils communicated their ideas using styles ranging from gothic to pop art. The support given to individuals is a common and strong feature of the teachers' work.

92. The high standards noted in the last inspection report have been maintained, and the criticism of a narrow curriculum has been tackled successfully. The use of IT has not been developed and the use of sketchbooks still needs to be strengthened to ensure that pupils, particularly at Key Stage 3, learn how to record information and try out ideas more thoroughly. The pupils' analytical skills remain somewhat superficial because teachers do not challenge pupils sufficiently in this way. Currently the weakest aspect of the department's work is the assessment of Key Stage 3 pupils' attainment and progress. There are no clear criteria used to judge standards and tell pupils how to improve. Assessment at Key Stage 4 is, however, good. There is an effective, collaborative approach between the two members of staff although a more formal method for moderating standards is needed, as well as a system for monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning in order to raise standards further.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

93. The proportion of pupils achieving grades A\*-C at GCSE in 1999 in design and technology was 57% compared with the national average of 50%; however, one in six pupils who studied the subject were not entered. In 1998 and 1999 girls achieved more than boys; however, all the pupils entered for design and technology during this period did worse in this subject than in the average of all their other subjects. Since the last inspection, examination results in graphic products have shown significant improvement but results in electronic products and food have fallen. The 1999 results in resistant

materials look impressive but with a high proportion, mostly boys, either not entered or taking short courses comparisons with national figures lack validity.

94. At Key Stage 3 attainment is satisfactory overall. Where attainment is good it is because teachers have high expectations, manage pupils well, use information technology to good effect and create a productive working atmosphere. In food lessons pupils have to work hard to meet short-term targets when they are involved in the sensory evaluation of pasta products. In the best lessons teachers intervene purposefully to improve learning. In a Year 9 control lesson pupils had to programme a sequence of instructions into a computer-driven control box in order to control the output of an electric motor. At the start of the lesson the teacher checked that everybody understood how the control box worked, and any misunderstandings were corrected. All the pupils were absorbed in the practical activity that followed and they were able to make good progress.

95. Progress is good when the teachers make use of examples from life or use analogy to help their pupils to understand difficult ideas. A Year 8 lesson started with the teacher and the pupils discussing industrial production lines and how they are organised to improve efficiency. The pupils then took different roles on a simulated electronics production line. The lesson ended with a discussion of how their line could be improved.

96. By the end of Year 9 the standard of graphical presentation, the use of technical equipment, the discussion and modelling of ideas have all improved. Pupils can also use a range of materials and tools including computers with increased precision and control.

97. At Key Stage 4 the school does not meet its statutory requirements for design and technology. Attainment is satisfactory overall for those taking the course. Standards are above average in graphic products, just below average in food and below average in resistant materials and electronic products, but both of these are improving.

98. The overall quality of teaching has improved. There is good teaching in one out of two lessons in all areas at both key stages; however, one in nine lessons is unsatisfactory because of poor class management and, additionally in one lesson, insufficient attention being paid to basic safety skills. There are also some weaknesses in otherwise satisfactorily taught lessons. At Key Stage 4 most pupils know the standard of their work and are clear about how to improve it because of a well-organised system of assessment. Pupils at Key Stage 3 are not always clear about their achievements.

99. Pupils with special educational needs receive teaching of the same quality as other pupils and they make satisfactory progress. In a Year 8 graphics lesson a pupil with learning difficulties had been struggling to draw an object in isometric projection. By the end of the lesson through the skill and purposeful intervention of his teacher he was happily and proudly demonstrating his new-found skill in three-dimensional drawing.

100. The teaching of design skills, a weakness at the last inspection, is developing slowly because of inconsistent planning at Key Stage 3 where it simply focuses on lists of activities to be completed. For example, product evaluations often describe how tasks were completed rather than making judgements about the effectiveness of design solutions.

101. The department monitored and evaluated its work early in 1999. This review effectively highlighted key aspects for development for individual members of staff. It also identified the weaknesses in the rotation system at Key Stage 3 and appropriate aspects for development. The large size of some teaching groups was constraining progress and limiting attainment at the last inspection, which is still the case. The department needs to develop more rigorous monitoring and evaluation procedures to improve the quality of teaching. The importance of computer-aided design and

manufacture in the revised National Curriculum has been recognized and is a strength of this department; however, computers and software that are rapidly becoming out of date will restrict future success.

102. Since the last inspection the storage of materials has improved. There is a lack of provision of variable height furniture and equipment to allow all pupils, including those in wheelchairs, to access the full range of opportunities. Risk assessments have been drawn up but they are not always applied effectively. This must be tackled as a matter of urgency to ensure a safe working environment for both teachers and pupils.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

103. In 1999 the proportion of pupils achieving grades A\*-C in GCSE geography was a little above the national average; however, only three-quarters of the pupils that studied geography were entered for this exam. Non-entry of pupils taking the GCSE course inflates the results. Statistics show that from the whole cohort that studied geography 41% of pupils achieved A\*-C grades and 73% achieved A\*-G grades. These results are well below national averages and the trend shows fluctuations in results over the last three years but no significant improvement. GCSE results show no significant difference between boys' and girls' attainment. Any valid comparisons with other subjects are not possible because of the non-entry of a quarter of the pupils.

104. The standards achieved by pupils aged 14 is in line with national expectations; they make good progress through the key stage. Towards the end of Key Stage 3, for example, pupils have a thorough understanding about living and working on a tea plantation in Kericho in Kenya. They make a small brochure to show the advantages of living and working there. They illustrate their brochures effectively using their mapwork skills with short statements to locate the village. Pupils successfully make comparisons between the lifestyles of the United Kingdom and that of north-west Kenya. The pupils work with enthusiasm and pace and show good attitudes to their work. They listen well, concentrate, and share resources where necessary. They work well both individually and in small groups. Pupils with special educational needs are given good strategies and helped by teachers to ensure they are able to complete tasks successfully. In all three years of the key stage, a small proportion of pupils use examples from the Internet and material from CD-ROMs to improve their work. They learn the skills of geographical enquiry through the use of information technology. Teachers plan and prepare work well. They make effective use of resources and have good relationships with the pupils. The features of good planning, preparation and relationships contribute significantly to the good learning and progress made by pupils in Key Stage 3. Teachers make good use of questioning techniques in order to reinforce understanding and to challenge and extend learning. Throughout the key stage teachers ensure that pupils learn basic geographical skills, physical and human geography and correct use of geographical vocabulary. For example, simple well-drawn diagrams and sketch maps are appropriately labelled and spider diagrams are well laid out in order to categorise brainstorming ideas. The majority illustrate their work effectively with pie charts and graphs to represent simple numerical data. At times, work is insufficiently challenging. It does not fully extend the higher-attaining pupils and often is too difficult for low attainers and those pupils with learning difficulties. Occasionally, there is an insufficient range of teaching strategies of a practical or group nature to involve pupils fully in their learning.

105. Although 16-year-old pupils are making good progress, overall their standard of attainment is just below national expectations. At the end of Key Stage 4, pupils understand the need to conserve the rainforest and protect the environment, by studying the management of the Brazilian rainforest. The majority understands the importance of achieving a balance between conservation and the utilisation of forest resources. Teachers and pupils use good up-to-date information through visiting appropriate worldwide web sites. This ensures that there is good progression and continuity in pupils' learning.

Very good use is also made of the Internet in Year 10 in the pupils' study of coastal erosion, comparing the coast at Barton-on-Sea and Hurst Castle. Enquiry through the use of the computer is now strongly developed especially at Key Stage 4. This enhances learning and significantly extends all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Pupils are well motivated and enjoy the subject. They concentrate well and work hard. Enquiry techniques, with the teacher moving round the classroom, supporting and challenging pupils with questions and making them compare and link knowledge, ensure that pupils of all abilities make good progress in their learning; however, at times, the challenges are insufficient to raise levels of attainment.

106. The quality of teaching is good at both key stages. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen during the inspection. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. A strength of the department is its use of information technology especially in Key Stage 4. Staff have good geographical knowledge. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good. Better assessment of pupils' attainment is needed to improve target-setting and to inform future curriculum planning. At times, especially at Key Stage 3, there is insufficient use of practical work to involve pupils in their learning. In a small minority of lessons the range of tasks does not fully extend the range of pupils within a class. Overall, teachers make good demands on their pupils; however, there are occasions when even greater demands on pupils in both oral and written work are needed in order to raise standards further.

107. The department has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. The most significant improvement has been in the standard of teaching with almost three-quarters now being good. The very recent GCSE trial examinations show an improvement for the coming year on the attainment achieved in 1999. Least improvement has been made in the collection, analysis and use of data and the development of resources. The staff are committed to the raising of pupils' attainment.

## **HISTORY**

108. The number of pupils entered for GCSE history has been below 20 in each of the last three years. Results have been consistently above the national average by a small margin. The numbers have doubled in the current Year 11, as the subject's fortunes have improved.

109. At Key Stage 3 attainment is in line with national expectations. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of the causes and consequences of events are well developed. Year 8 pupils write at length on the causes of the English Civil War, and Year 9 pupils are able to link short and long-term causes in explaining the outbreak of the First World War. They can use historical sources well to find out information, such as in a Year 8 investigation of what happened at the battle of Naseby. Pupils organise their own project work successfully on topics such as factory life in the nineteenth century, presenting it well. They are beginning to evaluate sources, as in a Year 9 lesson looking at propaganda in recruitment posters for the Great War, but there are limited opportunities for pupils to examine evidence critically. Different interpretations of past events and famous people receive little coverage and, not surprisingly, pupils did not perform well when they were given such an exercise as the end of key stage test piece. Progress in learning is good across the key stage. Teachers set their lesson objectives at three levels to challenge all pupils in the mixed-ability classes, and simplify worksheets for lower-attaining pupils. Careful attention is given to developing literacy, emphasising subject vocabulary and providing pupils with writing frames to plan their essays. Pupils are responding well to the individual targets that teachers set for them when they mark their work. The variety of resources used - texts, worksheets, video and artefacts - is also promoting pupils' learning.

110. At Key Stage 4 attainment is also in line with national expectations. Year 10 pupils are making good progress in planning and writing historical essays, analysing questions carefully to determine what

is relevant to include in their answers. They are achieving a good standard of work as a result of thorough instruction in essay technique. Teachers are making pupils think for themselves ahead of referring to their textbook, as in one Year 10 lesson where pupils had to work out from the Nazi idea of a master race, who were the most vulnerable groups in German society. Year 11 pupils preparing their coursework on the Vietnam war are benefiting from the thorough training in source analysis that they receive. They are working hard and reaching a good standard. Their exercise books show sound knowledge and understanding of key developments in the history of medicine. Teachers maintain a good balance between notes and exercises that test understanding, monitoring pupils' work closely and setting targets to aid progress.

111. The quality of teaching is good at both key stages. Lessons are well planned with a clear emphasis on learning objectives that balance the acquisition of knowledge and skills in the subject. They are delivered with enthusiasm and good humour. Teachers manage their pupils effectively to make best use of lesson time. They use a wide range of resources in their teaching, including artefacts, to interest all pupils. Marking is done thoroughly, providing pupils with constructive criticism on how to improve. Pupils respond well to their teachers across the school, giving them full co-operation and working well together when required. Behaviour in lessons is very good. The subject's popularity is rising with more pupils choosing to study it at Key Stage 4 than in previous years.

112. Since the last inspection there has been a big improvement in the teaching of the subject, the need for which was a key issue at the time. The change has been brought about by the commitment of the teachers and the support given by the school management to their professional development, along with the allocation of extra resources. The head of department monitors pupil attainment and enables teachers to share good practice. Improving assessment is now a priority if standards are to be raised further. Current arrangements, which rely heavily on an end of year test are not able to gauge National Curriculum levels accurately. There needs to be a range of assessments covering all the skills, and a recording system to monitor progression to the higher levels, which will provide the evidence on which to base an accurate judgement of pupil performance at the end of the key stage.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

113. The proportion of A\*-C grades in the full GCSE information technology were below the national average in 1999 but significantly better than the previous year. Results achieved by girls were markedly better than those of boys. A\*-C grades in the short course IT, which was taken for the first time in 1999, were poor.

114. In discrete IT lessons at Key Stage 3 attainment is satisfactory overall. At Key Stage 4 attainment is satisfactory in Year 11, and in Year 10 it is often good, demonstrating significant progress during the first half of Year 10. There have been changes in the management and teaching of IT since September. New schemes of work are in place and new assessment procedures are being implemented at Key Stage 3. Procedures for monitoring and assessing coursework on the examination courses are much improved. At both key stages, the challenging work in handling information and modelling, using spreadsheets, is enabling pupils to make good progress in this aspect of IT as well as contributing effectively to the development of number skills. In a Year 10 lesson, pupils were using IT as a tool to demonstrate an understanding of mathematical concepts. The majority were able to explain in detail what they had done and where they had gone wrong. They were able to construct complex formulae, check the accuracy of the spreadsheet, format it appropriately and add graphics to make the final product attractive to a specific audience. Evidence which pupils hold in their on-screen portfolios indicates a level of work in communicating information and control which is at least sound and sometimes good. There are opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to practise their IT skills. This contributes to successful lessons in many subjects. In a geography lesson, for example, pupils make effective use of the Internet to search for information on coastal management. The assessment of

the use of IT in the subjects of the curriculum has yet to be developed, and more use of IT is needed in some subjects.

115. In IT lessons pupils are well motivated and apply themselves diligently. They are able to collaborate effectively when required. The level of keyboarding skills varies within all groups and some pupils are content to use one hand only. Teaching at Key Stage 3 is at least satisfactory and more often good. At Key Stage 4 teaching is good and in some lessons very good. Aims are clear, lessons well planned and classroom management almost always good. Work is challenging and includes differentiated activities to match the varying levels of attainment. Pupils are well supported when working at computers. Suitable homework is set regularly.

116. Appropriate improvements have taken place in response to the last inspection, although some of these are recent. Effective management of IT is now contributing to an improvement in standards. Resources have been increased and updated, although there are still some computers in use which are very limited and unable to run modern software. More pupils at Key Stage 4 are taking accredited courses in IT and there are plans for all to take GCSE IT. Although there is significant use of IT in many subjects there is no map of cross-curricular use to inform planning and help to ensure that all pupils have similar experiences of all aspects of IT.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

117. Since the last inspection the curriculum arrangements in modern languages have changed several times. There were no GCSE entries in Spanish in 1999 as the school was unable to offer Spanish at Key Stage 4 because of staffing problems and Spanish is no longer taught. GCSE examination results in German in 1996 and 1997 were good, well above and at national averages for the higher A\*-C grades with fairly small groups of pupils. With a very small group of twelve pupils in 1998 there were 84% A\*-C grades, with a high proportion of A grades. Results have improved in French, from well below average for the higher grades in 1996 and 1997 to well above average in 1998 and 1999, but with smaller groups of pupils. The pupils entered for French in 1999 did significantly better in this subject than in the average of all their other subjects. The school enters a much smaller proportion of its pupils for a full GCSE in a modern language than do most schools.

118. Observed attainment is a little below average at Key Stage 3. By Year 9 many pupils are achieving well in German, as in a mixed-ability group where most pupils displayed good listening and speaking skills throughout a very well sequenced lesson on the topic of food and health. The pupils responded well to a variety of very good opportunities that helped those of varying attainment to practise their language skills appropriately. Many pupils at both key stages in German and to a lesser extent in French use the foreign language confidently for simple classroom communication, for instance to ask for help or for more work. The work seen in exercise books and in class in French shows that many pupils are not achieving as well by the end of the key stage, although all the language skills are being consistently practised. Most pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 3 but unsatisfactory progress at Key Stage 4 for the reasons outlined. In both languages many pupils are able to understand short extracts from their textbooks and most pupils read more widely with the aid of glossaries or dictionaries. Teaching is only occasionally less than satisfactory and it is good or very good in a third of lessons. It is mirrored by the pupils' progress in individual lessons. Strengths in the teaching at Key Stage 3 are the good variety of tasks reflecting the full range of National Curriculum requirements and good class management. Where teaching was unsatisfactory, over-complicated explanations caused confusion and pupils were unable to complete the task adequately. Most pupils behave well and relationships are good in many groups. While still behaving well, some pupils are passive, as in one upper French group where the pupils are not making the progress that they should despite the teacher's efforts.

119. At Key Stage 4 all pupils continue to study the language they began in Year 7 for one lesson per week and some pupils choose French or German as an option, with additional time. In the full course GCSE groups in German, attainment ranges from well above average to average, with the majority above average. Listening skills are good in both languages, helped by lessons skilfully conducted in the foreign language, an improvement since the last inspection. Speaking skills are more varied, good in German, but less well developed in French, with pupils less confident orally. There is regular practice of reading and writing skills, and good diagnostic marking is improving the pupils' accuracy in both languages. In French, although there is a spread within the groups, attainment is overall below average. Both teachers and pupils point to staffing problems in both languages: the full GCSE French group in Year 11 is being well taught but by its fourth teacher, with gaps in teaching because of illness and absence, despite the department's efforts to minimise the effect. Staffing problems were also adversely affecting learning at the time of the last inspection.

120. In the compulsory language groups, taken by the great majority of pupils, there is a very wide range of achievement and many pupils are not achieving at appropriate levels. Attainment is mainly well below average. One teacher is successfully preparing her pupils for the GCSE half course in German in the single compulsory lesson per week with very well-prepared resources as seen in a Year 11 lesson on the topic of work. The class was divided into three groups, one with the beginner teacher, one with the department's long-serving assistant covering work prepared by the teacher who was able to provide good oral practice for the remaining pupils. All three groups were able to make good progress, working at appropriate levels and with individual help. This is not possible for all teachers and in French the foreign language assistant changes each year and is not trained for work of this intensity, so the resources are not available. Most pupils follow the Certificate of Achievement course, which does not cater for the needs of the range of pupils in the compulsory groups. This was demonstrated by the reaction of a significant minority of the pupils in one group doing the course assessments at the end of a unit of work. Most pupils found the reading and the first writing assessment which was simply copying words, far too easy and some said, with justification, that it was ridiculous. The attitudes and behaviour of a significant minority of pupils in this lesson adversely affected their learning. Teaching across the key stage is only occasionally less than satisfactory and is often good or very good, with many of the same strengths as at Key Stage 3.

121. There is good monitoring of teaching within the department. In many lessons there is a very clear focus on examination requirements, but without narrow examination drilling. Most pupils behave well and many pupils in the GCSE groups have good attitudes. No visits that would allow the pupils to speak their foreign language in its home country are arranged. This is both abnormal and a disadvantage for the school's pupils.

## **MUSIC**

122. In 1999, 93% of pupils taking the GCSE examination achieved grades A\*-C. The number taking the exam was too small to make reliable comparisons with the national average and a quarter of pupils who studied the subject were not entered for the examination; however, the proportion of pupils achieving high grades has been consistently well above the national figure for three years and almost all of the pupils entered in 1999 achieved grades higher than in the average of all their other subjects.

123. Within Key Stage 3, the pupils work at appropriate musical tasks and learn to understand basic musical vocabulary well, read simple notation efficiently and relate the sounds of intervals and timbres to the creation of mood and effect. Some skills are, however, not sufficiently well established and by Year 9 a large minority of pupils do not reach the standards of accuracy or difficulty which are expected. For example, some produce only very simple compositions and a large number find it difficult to play well in time with others. The teacher's formal assessment of standards at the end of the key stage indicates that a very high proportion of pupils reached the national expectation in 1999 but

the system for relating school assessments to this expectation is weak. There is insufficient evidence to substantiate the levels awarded.

124. At Key Stage 4, only a small number of lessons and other work were available for inspection. The compositions heard ranged from average to good whilst pupils displayed a much wider range of skill in aural work. Very little written work is done to enable pupils to reinforce and apply their learning and, because there is no scheme of work for Key Stage 4, links between the performing, composing and listening elements of the GCSE syllabus are not well developed.

125. Standards in extra-curricular music are satisfactory, given the technical ability and experience of the performers. Most of them play and sing accurately although too little attention is given to achieving variety and expression and to presenting work effectively to audiences. The pupils are enthusiastic and good numbers are involved, but they are mostly girls, with very few boys, and the school needs to establish opportunities which motivate boys across the age range.

126. At both key stages, the pupils' attitudes to music are good. They behave well because the teachers' expectations are clear, firm and positive. Encouraged by the enthusiasm of the teachers, they respond openly and with interest to the range of musical styles that are introduced to them. The teaching is always at least satisfactory and, in Year 7, often very good. Theory and practice are well balanced and, in the best lessons in Year 7, the pace of the teaching is very well controlled and the pupils are fully engaged in practising techniques and evaluating each other's attempts. On the other hand, the pupils' group work is sometimes unsatisfactory when too much time is given for simple tasks and when it has not been made clear enough to the pupils exactly what is required or the criteria by which a piece of work will be measured. Lacking this information, pupils are not able to be self-critical or to support each other in achieving the best results.

127. The department does not have a system to monitor the effectiveness of the pupils' learning and to identify changes in the teaching which could raise their attainment. More purposeful observation of teachers, both within the department and by senior staff, are also needed to enable the present satisfactory teaching to continue to improve. Since the last inspection, both teaching and planning have improved. Some modifications have been made to the accommodation although the lack of small working spaces still means that pupils' attainment is hampered by noise interference between groups. There has been insufficient progress in planning links with primary schools to ensure that the teaching within Key Stage 3 builds upon what pupils have learnt at Key Stage 2. The department now needs to review its homework policy to make sure that each unit of work is supported by appropriate listening, appraising and research between lessons.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

128. At Key Stage 4 pupils have the option to study GCSE physical education. In 1999 the proportion of pupils achieving A\*-C grades was well above the national average and the best ever results for the department. The results for girls have continued to improve over the last three years and are now much closer to those of the boys.

129. At Key Stage 3, the majority of 14-year-olds are working towards national expectations in the games and activities being taught. The attainment of boys is marginally higher than girls at this key stage but both are reaching satisfactory levels of attainment. From mixed skill levels of attainment on entry the pupils quickly establish a good grounding in physical activity and establish good rates of progress as they move through Key Stage 3. Learning objectives are clearly explained at the start of every lesson. Effective questioning and timely interventions by teachers ensure that pupils are making progress and fully understand what is required of them. The pupils experience work that is challenging, for example in a Year 7 netball lesson where they were observing and analysing play. In Years 7, 8



and 9 boys were refining their skills through rigorous drills whilst working towards a full rugby game. The majority of pupils can swim at least 25 metres by Year 8. Where pupils are withdrawn at Year 8 for additional language teaching there is a noticeable difference in their attainment.

130. The attainment of all pupils in Key Stage 4 is above average for both girls and boys. Very good levels of skill development are evident in several sports, notably badminton, football, rugby, swimming and trampoline. All pupils are entered for the CCPR Sports Leader Award, which has led to a significant number of pupils gaining the qualification. Throughout Key Stage 4, pupils continue to refine and develop their skills and techniques in their chosen activities. Good teaching contributes to the high level of attainment. Pupils are encouraged to improve their performance through video observation, formative assessment and taking responsibility for their own target-setting. All pupils have a secure understanding of the need for appropriate warm-up before physical activity and in many instances take the initiative to do this unaided by the teacher. High standards are expected and achieved across all key stages.

131. The pupils' attitude towards physical education is very good. There are very high standards of kit with good attendance and participation by the pupils. Behaviour is excellent in lessons with a working atmosphere that is purposeful. During a Year 11 football skills reassessment, a challenging group of boys worked in silence demonstrating their concentration and desire to improve their grades. Where possible pupils are offered the opportunity to take on responsibility for their learning and that of others. In these situations pupils sensibly offer advice, such as in Year 8 dance where constructive comments were made by pupils to assist partners, or in Year 10 where pupils assessed the games devised by their peers for the Junior Sports Leaders Award.

132. Opportunities in lessons and during extra-curricular activities cater for the needs, interests and abilities of all pupils. Current team and competition results over a number of sports indicate the high skill level of the pupils, with some individuals securing places at junior club level. The overall physical education facilities in the school are excellent and allow pupils to experience a wide range of sports. If aspects of the sports hall and swimming pool were enhanced it would encourage further community use.

133. Strong leadership with a clear sense of purpose and an experienced department contribute to the pupils' achievements. In addition, two recent staff appointments have enabled the department to broaden their curriculum. The subject is effectively monitored and evaluated by both the head of department and senior management. This has led to good planning with decisions based on sound evidence. Teaching is of a high standard overall both during lessons and in extra-curricular sessions. The pupils' attendance at lunchtime and after school activities is very good and demonstrates how they value this subject. Particular strengths of the teachers are their support for each other and their own high skill levels. Members of the department have focused their training to develop new aspects, for example certificate level for Key Stage 4 pupils and the new assessment arrangements for physical education and to develop their own management or teaching skills. Through the pastoral posts held by two members of staff they have a valued impact on pupil learning and development beyond their subject.

134. Physical education has made very good progress since the last inspection. Weaknesses have been tackled with notable successes in the application of learning outcomes and assessment, which are now strengths of the subject. Whilst the integration of individual education plans has been a whole-school development there is still an opportunity to use physical skills within the target-setting process. This could enhance the confidence, concentration and co-ordination skills of pupils and be transferred to other areas of the curriculum. Having moved from a skill-based to an activity-based curriculum the department continues to balance physical education activities alongside games, which remain a major strength of the school. The developments overall have greatly improved the quality of teaching and learning in this subject.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

135. The number of pupils entered for GCSE in religious education fell to single figures in 1999 and the results for the last two years have been below the national average. In 1998, the decision was made to teach the GCSE short course to all pupils and the first candidates will be entered this summer. This has lent more rigour to pupils' study of the subject and increased their motivation.

136. Attainment at Key Stage 3 is in line with what is expected nationally. Pupils build up a sound knowledge of key aspects of five major religions and a good understanding of the significance of religious practices for believers. Year 8 pupils studying places of worship are very knowledgeable about the Hindu mandir. This is achieved by a stimulating series of lessons that involve an Internet search, group work and a visit to the Neasden mandir that has generated much interest. In their display work pupils show spiritual awareness in expressing their feelings about the visit. Year 9 pupils display the same knowledge and insight on the subject of Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca. Pupils are able to empathise with the pilgrims in their diaries of the Hajj. Teachers make good use of artefacts and role-play to help pupils to reach this level of understanding. Pupils have a good knowledge of religious terms, as subject vocabulary is carefully taught and key words displayed. All pupils make good progress in the subject, helped by the variety of learning activities in lessons and the graduated tasks that cater for the pupils' different levels of attainment in the mixed-ability classes.

137. At Key Stage 4 attainment is also in line with national expectations at the end of the key stage. Year 11 pupils in the two pilot groups for the GCSE short course examination are making good progress towards the standard expected for achieving higher grades. They have a good understanding of moral issues and the relevant Christian teaching on them. In a lesson on religion and materialism, pupils were able to use Bible references to find out Christian attitudes to money and respond to them intelligently in discussion. Their written work is thorough and well presented. Motivation is not as high in the other groups but pupils are finding the issues relevant and taking account of religious teaching in forming their own views. Teachers are making use of interesting materials such as questionnaires and case studies to stimulate discussion and point up the relevance of religious views. Pupils are keeping a satisfactory note record of the topics studied. Year 10 pupils are making good progress on the course. In one lesson on the question of gender equality in the Christian churches, a class of lower-attaining pupils was able to carry out an investigation of the arguments for and against women priests and give their own views at the end. Highly effective teacher organisation of this practical activity enabled pupils to achieve this outcome. Learning is just satisfactory in one all-boys group in Year 10, where some pupils were unable to work together on a project.

138. The quality of teaching is good overall. The standard varies among the teaching team but is always at least satisfactory. The non-specialists are teaching the subject competently with the assistance of the specialist teacher who provides notes and teaching materials for lesson preparation. The strength of the teaching is in the variety of teaching methods employed to engage pupils actively in their learning, ranging from use of artefacts to games and Internet searches. Textbooks are in short supply at Key Stage 3 but the head of faculty has collected together a stimulating bank of learning materials to support the courses. Marking is particularly helpful and detailed, encouraging pupils in their work and showing them how to improve. Pupils respond well to the teaching at both key stages and behave well in almost all lessons. A small minority do not listen to each other in class discussion but the majority of pupils enjoy the exchange of views and show sensitivity in their exploration of other faiths.

139. Teamwork within the humanities faculty and the willingness of other teachers with responsibilities elsewhere to help with the teaching contributes towards the success of the department. The head of faculty manages the team well to ensure a coherent experience for all pupils. The difficult area for non-

specialists is enabling pupils to learn from religion through reflection that takes them into the spiritual dimension of the subject. The situation could only be improved by the appointment of another specialist teacher to put the staffing for religious education on the same footing as other humanities subjects.

141. Since the last inspection the department has improved its teaching and the documentation and teaching materials to support it. Teaching continues to be variable with so many staff involved, but within a narrower range. The introduction of the GCSE short course for all pupils has raised its status and the variety of lesson activities has made learning both enjoyable and effective. The head of department monitors the quality of teaching to ensure an equivalence of experience for the pupils.