

INSPECTION REPORT

GARSTON MANOR SCHOOL

Watford

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117667

Headteacher: David Harrison

Reporting inspector: Michael McDowell
1405

Dates of inspection: 17 - 20 June 2002

Inspection number: 192539

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community special
Age range of pupils:	11 to 16 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Horseshoe Lane Garston Watford Hertfordshire
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs. Ann Chiverton-Hunt
Date of previous inspection:	3 March 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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1405	Michael McDowell	Registered inspector	Physical education Religious education	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements How well are pupils or students taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
19692	Robert Folks	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils and students? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
15918	Margaret Goodchild	Team inspector	English Art and design English as an additional language	
13623	James Waddington	Team inspector	Mathematics History Music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils and students?
1240	Joseph Edge	Team inspector	Science Design and technology	Equal opportunity
20622	Ann Sydney	Team inspector	Geography Modern foreign language Special educational needs	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	12
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?	14
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?	17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	20
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	22
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	22
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	25
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	26
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	29

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Garston Manor provides special education for up to 115 boys and girls aged between 11 and 16 who have statements of special educational need mostly because of moderate learning difficulties. There are 71 boys and 37 girls on roll. Most of the pupils are white but there are a small number from other ethnic groups. There are also some refugee and some Traveller children. Pupils come from across a wide area of Hertfordshire. About one third of the pupils are eligible for free school meals. Most pupils enter the school at the beginning of the school year but some, who come from mainstream schools or from other areas, enter at times others than those prescribed. In the last 12 months 8 pupils did this.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is effective in enabling pupils, many of whom enter with very low levels of attainment, to make good progress, become confident learners and achieve well in their lessons and over time. The quality of teaching is good overall. The school is led well by the headteacher and the senior managers and leadership in the curriculum is secure. Management is substantially successful but there remain difficulties to resolve to ensure that the school continues to improve. It provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils make good progress and develop useable learning skills from a very low starting point. By the time they leave school they are well prepared and have positive attitudes to undertaking further learning or training.
- Pupils make very good progress and achieve very well in religious education and physical education and in their intensive literacy programme in Year 7.
- Teaching is of a very high quality in physical education and religious education, and of good quality in English, mathematics, science, French, and design and technology. This enables pupils to achieve well and develop their confidence as learners.
- There is wide range of learning opportunities, including careers education and guidance of high quality. Pupils with specific literacy difficulties are given very good support.
- Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are very good. There are good constructive relationships between pupils and adults that provide a positive model that helps pupils' personal development.
- The school is well led by its headteacher, while those with leadership responsibilities provide effective support.

What could be improved

- Homework is used insufficiently to promote independent learning and improve achievement.
- The process for setting precise learning targets for individual pupils is not yet established. Teachers make insufficient use of learning targets when planning lessons.
- Not all teachers apply the school's behaviour management strategy consistently and for some pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties the strategy is not fully effective.
- The governors do not fully understand or apply the principles of best value. They do not ensure that there is a daily corporate act of worship and they do not make full use of all available means to monitor the performance of the school.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the action plan prepared by the appropriate authority.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in March 1997; it has made satisfactory improvement and has addressed all of the issues raised in the last report, most of which it has fully resolved. Very good procedures are now in place to ensure a higher level of attendance and the number of fixed-term exclusions has been reduced. A clear vision for the school is incorporated in its mission statement and the whole school community, including parents, is aware of this. The curriculum is effectively managed and a framework for a common assessment policy has been put in place. However, some statutory requirements, for

example, the provision of a daily corporate act of worship, noted in the last report, are still not complied with. The school now makes effective provision to promote pupils' spirituality and creativity.

STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils achieve in relation to their individual targets.

Progress in:	by Year 11	Key	
speaking and listening	B	very good	A
reading	B	good	B
writing	C	satisfactory	C
mathematics	B	unsatisfactory	D
personal, social and health education	B	poor	E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	C		

* IEPs are individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs.

In most subjects pupils achieve well and make good progress. Pupils develop their communication and literacy skills from a low base at entry in Year 7 so that by the time they are in Year 10 their achievement is good. Pupils make good progress in mathematics and their achievement is higher than expected. In science, pupils' learning gets off to a brisk start with good achievement by Year 9. However in Year 10 and Year 11 their rate of learning slows so that by the time they leave school their achievement is satisfactory. Pupils across the age range make excellent progress and achieve very highly in religious education. In physical education achievement and progress are very good. Pupils achieve well in French, design and technology and information and communication technology. In art and design, music, geography and history, achievement is satisfactory. Progress is slower than it should be in a few lessons, including some in mathematics, science, English, graphic design, geography and music. Here teaching is not well matched to pupils' learning abilities, lessons lack pace and behaviour is not well managed. In comparison with pupils in similar schools nationwide, as measured by the "P-scales", a national scheme designed to measure the small increments in learning of pupils with special educational needs, pupils make better than average progress. The school sets targets for overall achievement at age 16. It is on course to meet these. However, individual targets, where these are set, are often imprecise and are of no help in measuring progress. In their lessons in personal, social and health education, including their work in careers education, pupils make good progress and achieve well.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils show by their regular attendance that they enjoy coming to school and in most cases they take part in their lessons and school activities with enthusiasm and a good attitude.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. In the majority of lessons behaviour is good; however there are a few instances of unsatisfactory behaviour in a small minority of lessons. Pupils move about the school to their lessons or their breaks in an orderly way. The number of exclusions has decreased markedly since the last inspection.

Aspect	Comment
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils respond well to the good examples provided by adults of how people should treat one another and they apply this to their own relationships.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance has improved since the last inspection and is now comparable to that in similar schools nationwide.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 11
Quality of teaching	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.

Good. In a clear majority of lessons the quality of teaching is good and, in a significant minority, teaching is of high quality. In these cases, teachers use their secure knowledge of what pupils are required to learn to produce pacy, challenging lessons and they manage their classes confidently and well. As a consequence, pupils show their desire to learn by trying hard to complete the tasks that are set for them, recalling what they have previously been taught and making use of this knowledge to help with their present learning. They have positive attitudes and behave well. The quality of teaching and learning is good in English. There is very good teaching in lessons for pupils in Year 7 who have literacy difficulties. In mathematics teaching is good and enables pupils to develop their numeracy skills so that they can use them in other contexts. Aspects of the national Numeracy Strategy, e.g. incorporating mental mathematics into lessons, are well used. Teaching in science is of good quality, overall. Subject knowledge is good and this is reflected in the rigour of the work. Expectations of pupils' achievements in science are high. There is good teaching in personal, social and health education. Careers lessons are good. In a small minority of lessons teachers are insufficiently aware of the individual characteristics of pupils and produce work that is unsuitable for them. On occasions there is too little challenge and variety in the work and pupils achieve little and sometimes become bored and restless. The unsatisfactory behaviour that emerges in these cases is not always well managed and learning time is lost. Insufficient emphasis is placed on the benefits of homework in helping pupils develop their independence as learners. Insufficient use is made of ICT in some subjects, especially history and geography.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and pupils are offered a wide range of learning opportunities. Good provision is made for learning outside of the classroom and for personal, social and health education. Careers education and guidance of high quality are provided. Pupils with specific literacy difficulties are given very good support. The amount of taught time is at the low end of expectations for secondary pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Spiritual and moral development is strongly supported in religious education. Moral development is supported by the code of conduct and by the good models that staff members provide in their interactions with pupils. Good social development is helped by the programme of personal, social and health education and by opportunities for pupils to attend work experience places and local colleges. Cultural development

	is strongly supported in some subjects especially art and religious education.
Aspect	Comment
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory. There are good procedures for child protection and for keeping a check on pupils' behaviour. Assessment of what pupils know understand and can do within subjects is satisfactory. However, precise individual learning targets are not always set. Procedures for managing pupils' behaviour are good but not always effective with more intractable cases. The school monitors attendance very well, reporting unexplained absence to parents at the first opportunity.

The school has satisfactory relationships with parents. They are pleased with a number of aspects of the school. They have concerns about the lack of homework, the regularity and nature of the information they receive about how their children are getting on, day to day, the behaviour of some pupils and the range of out of school activities. Parents in many cases live at some distance from the school and this limits their involvement, nevertheless they do attend parents' evenings and reviews and make a satisfactory contribution to their children's learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The school is well led by its headteacher, while those with leadership responsibilities provide effective support. Thought has been given to the educational direction that the school must take and the headteacher articulates its aims and purposes very clearly.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Satisfactory. The governing body has until recently been under-strength. It carries out most of its duties in line with statutory requirements, although it does not ensure that a daily corporate act of worship takes place. It oversees the budget and the curriculum but the governors make too little contribution to the setting of educational priorities. The principles of best value are not always applied when significant decisions are made.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school monitors teaching and learning well but it does not fully analyse the data that compares progress of its pupils with that of other similar schools.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Resources are used effectively to promote learning and sound financial planning has enabled the school to improve facilities for learning.

There are sufficient qualified and experienced teachers and trained support assistants to meet the needs of the pupils and the demands of the curriculum. Accommodation is good. Resources are sufficient in quantity and of good quality.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their children are taught well in a well-managed school• Teachers have high expectations of their children• Their children like school and it helps them become more mature and responsible	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• They would like to see more homework and for their children to have more to do outside of lessons• They would like more information about how their children are getting on and for the school to work more closely with parents• They would like the behaviour of some pupils to be improved

The inspectors agree with the parents' positive comments about the school. They also agree that there should be more use of homework and more consistent information about day-to-day events, including any homework that is set. They disagree with parents about out-of-class activities and judge that the school makes good provision. They also find that behaviour is generally good and well managed, although there are some very difficult pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils' achievement is good; both in their lessons and over time they make good progress in most subjects. Progress is most consistent among those pupils who do not have emotional and behavioural difficulties, in addition to their learning difficulties. The continuing emotional difficulties of a very small number of pupils adversely affect their attitude to learning and in these cases, progress is more irregular.
2. The school sets targets for pupils' performance at age 16. These refer to the results that it is anticipated pupils will achieve in the General Certificate of Secondary Education examinations and reflect what has historically been achieved. The set targets based on past performance are not very challenging and the school is on course to achieve them. It now has data about pupils' performance in all years that, should it choose to use it for the purpose, would enable it to set more challenging targets.
3. Achievement in English is good. Communication and literacy skills are low when pupils enter the school in Year 7 but good strides are made so that by the time they are in Year 11 most have good communication and functional literacy skills. The most impressive achievement in the development of literacy skills is found in Year 7 where a specific intensive literacy programme moves pupils on very effectively. Speaking and listening are similarly promoted strongly by the use of the Social Use of Language Programme. Pupils' achievement in speaking and listening is good overall and they are confident when talking about a range of topics familiar to them. They are careful listeners and are respectful when others are talking. Achievement in reading accelerates and is good by Year 10. Pupils read with understanding from literary texts or from passages of writing connected with other subjects. Achievement in writing is satisfactory and spelling improves over time. However, with few exceptions, pupils have insufficient opportunity to develop and practise writing skills in most subjects other than English.
4. Achievement is good in mathematics reflecting the continual progress pupils make throughout their time in school. For those who enter the school in Year 7, achievement is well below average and the improvement that is seen in their performance by Year 9, and more so by Year 11, is significant. A few pupils are being considered for entry in the GCSE examinations in Year 11 but most enter the Certificate of Educational Achievement (CoEA), examinations. Numeracy develops well in mathematics lessons but opportunities to make use of numeracy skills and to develop these in other areas of the curriculum are insufficient in some subjects.
5. Achievement in science is satisfactory and pupils make good progress in their first three years at the school. They carry out practical investigations and develop a good understanding of life processes, materials and physical processes. Recent staff changes have contributed to a slowing down of pupils' progress in Years 10 and 11 but by the time they leave school, pupils' achievement is in line with that of other pupils with similar difficulties. Higher attaining pupils gain GCSE certificates at entry level and above.

6. Achievement is excellent in religious education in which pupils systematically develop a broad knowledge of the teachings and customs of major world faiths, including Christianity, and, most impressively, derive from their work a deep understanding of significant moral issues.
7. Achievement is very good in physical education and pupils who enter the school with low levels of fitness and stamina make rapid progress, becoming good runners, competent games players and athletes, and good gymnasts. Pupils benefit from opportunities to undertake outdoor and adventurous activities that greatly increase their confidence and self-belief.
8. Achievement is good in design and technology, French, and information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils benefit from a wide ICT curriculum so that by age 16 higher attainers can do as much as mainstream pupils of the same age.
9. Achievement in art and design is satisfactory with swifter progress being made in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 7, 8 and 9. The work of pupils taking GCSE at the end of Year 11 includes sensitive line drawing, well founded research on well-known artists, and practical applications in painting, printing and drawing. Standards achieved in music are satisfactory and those pupils who have the greatest interest make significant progress. There are particular strengths in the work done by the end of Year 9 on song writing that reaches standards normally encountered in mainstream schools. Pupils develop extensive knowledge of the music of several cultures. Achievement in history and in geography is satisfactory but in both subjects progress is limited by the structure of the courses offered and the nature of the lessons.
10. Pupils achieve well in their lessons in personal, social and health education. They show increasing understanding of the world and its expectations in their work in careers education.
11. Because the individual targets set for pupils are not sufficiently precise they serve little purpose. Progress towards individual targets cannot be used by teachers as a reliable measure of individual pupil achievement. In addition, senior managers do not analyse pupils' attainment and progress in relation to gender or ethnicity.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. Most pupils like school. They talk about their favourite lessons and are happy to show off their work. They take part in a number of lunchtime clubs.
13. At the time of the last inspection, there was concern about the high level of exclusions. This is now much lower and has declined in most years since then. A small number of pupils are responsible for most of the exclusions. The school has good procedures for monitoring behaviour. Sometimes use is made of internal exclusion from lessons and fixed term exclusions from school as a means of making clear to pupils that some misdemeanours cannot be tolerated. On the rare occasions when these measures have been ineffective this has ultimately led to permanent exclusion. Since the last inspection, the school has employed a counsellor and her workload has been increasing, as pupils find her confidential services valuable.
14. The vast majority of pupils are well behaved and in a few lessons behaviour is excellent making it difficult to see how pupils could be more responsive. In most lessons, behaviour and attitudes to learning are good. A small number were seen in which behaviour was unsatisfactory and learning was undermined. In most cases the pupils' attitudes and their behaviour were very strongly related to the quality of the teaching.

Where behaviour was excellent the lessons had a clear purpose that was communicated to the pupils, the work was stimulating and the teacher clearly expected pupils to achieve good results. In the small number of incidences of unsatisfactory behaviour in lessons where pupils constantly call out or waste time, and refuse to cooperate, the teacher's expectations are not clear, or are pitched too low.

15. Pupils have taken part in drawing up the school behaviour policy. This is comprehensive and reflects the philosophy of the school. It identifies good behaviour as an outcome of good teaching and mutual respect. As at the last inspection, the policy was not consistently applied by all teachers. Most teachers give out points for good behaviour and the younger pupils especially are keen to collect these as they lead to rewards in a praise assembly. However, where planning is sketchy, the learning objectives of the lesson are not clear and the activities undemanding. As a consequence, teachers on occasion, find themselves resorting to sanctions because the first requirement of the behaviour policy, the provision of teaching that stimulates and challenges them to achieve, is not being met. Pupils behave well around the school and are courteous to staff and visitors. Relationships between pupils and adults are good. With only a small staff presence during lunch, pupils enjoy conversation and quiet music, and help to clear the dining hall. They have respect for the building and the staff. There are no graffiti.
16. There is a small number of recorded incidents of bullying and of racist remarks. These are followed up, for the most part to pupils' satisfaction, and parents of the victim and perpetrator are informed. Almost all parents feel that behaviour in the school has improved.
17. Almost all parents feel that their children become more mature and responsible at Garston Manor. Pupils show an increasing respect for each other and willingness to listen to one another. Older pupils independently research topics on the Internet and work as 'buddies' to help younger pupils with their reading. All pupils organise their own files and equipment in lessons and they show their initiative and independence in practical lessons in science and design and technology. There are however fewer opportunities for them to get involved in community activities outside the school than at the last inspection. The school council, with representatives elected from each class, has not met for some time, and there is some feeling among the representatives that their views are not acted on quickly enough. The weekly tutorial sessions, while they develop good relationships between tutors and their pupils, are not used to explore any issues about school.
18. Attendance is satisfactory and this is an improvement since the last inspection. The number of pupils who have unauthorised absence is now in line with schools of a similar kind elsewhere. The attendance at just under 88 per cent is a little lower than the average but the school has on roll a number of pupils who belong to Traveller families and their absences adversely affect the overall attendance figure.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19. The quality of teaching is good and this enables pupils to learn well and make gains over time, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Pupils achieve well in most subjects as they respond to well-planned and stimulating lessons. In almost six lessons out of ten teaching is good or better, and of these, the teaching in almost one lesson in five is very good or excellent. In a few subjects, however, teaching while satisfactory overall, does not always capture pupils' full attention and lead to their giving as much commitment to learning as they might.

20. The quality of teaching in English is good overall but there are significant variations. There is too great a difference in quality of teaching in the most effective and the least effective lessons. The teaching of literacy skills to pupils who are identified as having particular difficulties with reading and spelling is very effective. The intensive literacy course in Year 7, the Social Use of Language Programme in Year 8 and the Library Skills course in Year 7, enable pupils to develop their skill, knowledge and understanding rapidly. Overall, teaching in English is good. By Year 11, pupils have made significant progress, although this tends to be better in speaking, listening and reading than it does in writing. There are weaknesses in some of the English teaching, including over-reliance on worksheets to reinforce knowledge of spelling and grammar, the lack of clear individual targets by which pupils' progress can be measured.
21. In mathematics, teaching is good and enables pupils to develop their basic numeracy skills effectively. For those aged 11 to 14, good use is made of some features of the National Numeracy Strategy as, for example, the way in which mental arithmetic is used as a starter activity in lessons. However, more use should be made of this effective practice. Teachers make their lessons interesting and pupils respond well by concentrating and persevering with their tasks. Pupils are very proud of their work and they present it neatly and well. Teaching in mathematics gives pupils the chance to work together with others and they do this well. Because targets set for individuals are not sufficiently precise, the extent of progress cannot always be quickly measured.
22. In science, teaching and learning are good and in some lessons are of very high quality. The teachers are knowledgeable about their subject and have high expectations of their pupils. The work set is challenging for most and pupils respond by working at a good pace. They enjoy following up ideas that arise during lessons. Lower attaining pupils have noticeable difficulty in developing scientific vocabulary and understanding the concepts to which they are being introduced. They try their best but they are not sufficiently advanced in basic literacy skill to record their work independently. While teachers plan their work well in most areas, their planning to improve pupils' basic literacy and its use is insufficient.
23. Teaching is satisfactory in art and design where there are well-planned lessons that sometimes do not come to fruition because pupils will not make enough effort. The management of pupils' negative attitudes and unhelpful behaviour, particularly in Years 7, 8 and 9, means that pupils do not always get as much from lessons as they should. Teaching in design and technology is good overall and pupils show interest and commitment in most lessons. In a small number of lessons teaching fails to challenge the pupils and the pace is too slow. Teaching is satisfactory in geography but there is too much use of worksheets and where this is the case, lessons lack interest and fail to engage pupils. Teaching is also satisfactory in history. Relationships are positive between the teacher and pupils and there is good awareness of the need to reinforce pupils' literacy skills. However, there is too little emphasis on some aspects of history, such as the development of enquiry skills. Pupils enjoy their work in information and communication technology and they are taught effectively.
24. There is no unsatisfactory teaching and for pupils in Years 10 and 11, teaching is good. A strong feature of the best lessons is the encouragement of pupils to work without adult support. Teaching is good in French and time is used effectively. Pupils enjoy the experience of learning a new language and they are able to cope with the literacy demands of the subject because of the good adaptation made by teachers of the material used. In music, teaching is of a satisfactory standard and there is good knowledge of the subject. Pupils respond to their teacher's enthusiasm and in most lessons relationships are positive and helpful to learning. On occasions, however, a

minority of pupils challenges the authority of the teacher and this slows the pace of learning. Teaching in physical education is of very high quality. Lessons are very good or excellent across a wide range of activities, including games, outdoor and adventurous pursuits, and athletics. Knowledge of the subject is very high and management of the pupils is a very strong feature of lessons. As a result, pupils try hard and many reach standards that match those of their age contemporaries in mainstream schools. The quality of teaching in religious education is excellent. A strong enthusiasm for the subject permeates lessons and enables pupils to not only learn about world faiths but also to gain and make use of insights derived from them.

25. In the best teaching, all pupils are given equal opportunities to learn and make progress. In other lessons, work is not matched to the different learning needs within a class or to pupils' prior attainment. When this occurs, higher attaining pupils are particularly disadvantaged and make less progress than they should.
26. Teaching is at its best in subjects such as physical education, religious education, science, and literacy, where it is guided by very good understanding of what should be taught and how this might be best done. The best aspects of work in English, for example, are those where there is a structured approach that makes use of pupils' enthusiasm to learn, and clear techniques. Again, in physical education, the deep understanding of what is required to develop and improve physical performance is married to strategies for gaining the pupils' interest and commitment. Pupils in these circumstances push the boundaries of their performance further and they gain great confidence in themselves as successful learners. Where, as in science, expectations are high, pupils respond by increasing their involvement in the lessons. They learn to ask questions that help them develop understanding and they put facts together. In the best teaching the objectives of the lesson are clear and these are incorporated into an economic method for assessing pupils' performance. Where this is the case, it is possible to set progressive targets for the achievement of individual pupils.
27. In the better lessons, there is understanding that most pupils will need considerable assistance with reading, writing and spelling. The good practice of producing lists of relevant key words, or simple writing guides that will help pupils in recording their work, is found in a minority of lessons. Some very good use is made of special support assistants (SSAs). These are usually deployed well within the classroom, to ensure that pupils do the work that is set for them, helping them as necessary. The expertise of some SSAs is well used when they take the lead in some sessions that involve subjects in which they are expert. All of these good points make lessons very productive for most pupils. They become used to applying themselves and they expect to have, as a result of their lessons, new knowledge or new skills. They are pleased with this.
28. The most obvious weakness in some lessons was the management of behaviour. Other weaknesses were the lack of sufficient use of information and communication technology to promote learning, the use of a limited range of techniques and resources, for example, the over-reliance on worksheets, and insufficient use of homework.
29. The homework policy is confused and pupils' homework diaries have very few entries and do not appear to be checked. The weak provision of homework contributes to pupils remaining dependent as learners. They have little chance to learn for themselves.

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

30. There has been significant improvement since the last inspection in the range and quality of the learning opportunities offered to pupils. The curriculum is now good and fully meets statutory requirements. Pupils are given a broad and appropriately balanced educational experience in which there is sufficient emphasis on the core subjects, English, mathematics and science and on the other subjects of the National Curriculum and personal development. There is effective co-ordination of what is taught in English, mathematics and science and also in physical education, religious education, information and communication technology and French.
31. There has been an increase both in the number of courses that lead to the award of certificates by external examination bodies and in links with local schools and colleges that provide opportunities for pupils to mix with and be taught alongside their age peers in mainstream environments. For pupils who are aged 16, these factors have made the transition from school to further education or training much smoother. A greater element of choice has been introduced and pupils in their final years of schooling may now opt to follow a curriculum that is more suited to their interests and abilities.
32. Greater emphasis is now placed on making specific provision to meet the individual learning needs of pupils, for example, by providing, if necessary, a structured course in reading, writing and spelling in addition to the usual English lessons. This provision particularly focuses on pupils in Year 7 where the intensive programme offered results in supporting those with specific literacy difficulties very well.
33. Overall, the special educational needs of pupils are well known to the school and are taken into account when learning is being planned. In some subjects, however, there is still room for improvement in the match of tasks set to pupils' capabilities. In history and geography in particular, where much use is made of photocopied worksheets, the manner of teaching and the limited range of resources, do not ensure that pupils become fully familiar with important facts and concepts. There is no recording of their understanding of these facts and concepts in a way that is meaningful to the pupils.
34. In other subjects, the planning of what should be taught and how this should be done is developing well. In most cases there are clear plans to take pupils forward through the programmes of study of the National Curriculum.
35. There is no whole-school approach to the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in every subject. In lessons in religious education and French some provision to extend pupils' skills in these areas is made but in other subjects there is insufficient thought given to the development of literacy and numeracy. Similarly, information and communication technology is not used as well as it should be in some subjects, particularly history and geography, where its use is barely satisfactory.
36. Pupils who have special educational needs that include behavioural difficulties have their needs met effectively where teachers adhere to the school policy on behaviour and discipline. Where, as is the case in a few instances, teachers do not ensure that all of the provisions of the policy are adhered to, including those about teaching preparation and style, a few pupils cannot sustain learning activity and gain little from the lesson.
37. The curriculum is enhanced by a range of activities outside of the classroom. Visits from guest speakers contribute to pupils' learning in personal, social and health education and pupils visit places of worship or historical interest in the locality. There are theatre visits and all pupils have the opportunity to take part in residential and outdoor education visits. There are good well-structured programmes for careers

education for all pupils from the age of 13 and careers guidance is provided for older pupils. Education on the misuse of drugs and alcohol and on sex and relationships is given to all pupils.

38. The amount of taught time is at the low end of expectations for pupils of secondary school age. The effects of having insufficient time are felt within the curriculum in areas such as provision for information and communication technology, music and daily assemblies.
39. There are currently no pupils at an early stage in acquiring English. Past evidence suggests that pupils for whom English is an additional language make equal progress to their peers.
40. The school makes the extra provision required by statements of special educational need, for example, by providing small group and individual teaching for pupils with specific learning difficulties. A member of staff has been trained by speech and language therapists so that all Year 7 pupils have sessions in the 'Social Use of Language'. There is also a visiting occupational therapist who works with a small number of pupils. Some pupils have additional staffing financed through their statements, and learning support assistants are deployed effectively.
41. Pupils are given opportunities that are equal, regardless of gender or race. Option choices in design and technology are rather stereotyped, with girls choosing to study food technology and boys choosing to work in resistant materials. However, in physical education, boys and girls learn a wide range of physical skills that cut across games and activities regardless of gender. There are no wheelchair users in the school. The school is currently not fully accessible to pupils with significant mobility difficulties.
42. The school has not devised a satisfactory way of drawing up individual education plans for pupils that point out the way forward by setting clear, measurable and achievable targets in the key learning skills of communication, literacy, numeracy and attitudes to learning. This strand of information is not, therefore, available to help teachers when they are planning their lessons. The lack of clear agreed targets for individual pupils reduces the effectiveness of planning.
43. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. It is strongly supported in religious education lessons, through the study of religions and belief systems. Pupils visit a large number of places of worship, and have very good opportunities to write at length on religious and spiritual themes. Other areas of the curriculum, however, make a limited contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Although all subjects produced a policy for spiritual, moral and social development following the last inspection, the regular inclusion of a spiritual dimension across the curriculum is not much evident in pupils' work or in lessons. The school does not provide a daily act of collective worship. Assemblies are normally held twice a week; records show that pupils are given opportunities to reflect on social and moral themes, but that the inclusion of collective worship is rare. The school has made limited progress on this area, which was identified as a key issue in the last inspection.
44. Provision for moral development is satisfactory. It is supported by the involvement of pupils in developing the code of conduct and by the good role models that staff members provide in their interactions with pupils. Religious education makes a very good contribution to pupils' moral development, through the consideration of moral and ethical themes. Personal, social and health education provides good support to pupils' moral development through its focus on sex education, relationships, and the way it involves pupils in problem solving around moral issues such as bullying. There is some

consideration of environmental issues, for instance, through pond dipping at an environmental centre. Assemblies often focus on moral themes, but the school does not ensure that all pupils meet its expectations of what constitutes right and wrong. A minority of pupils who have emotional and behavioural difficulties flout conventions of what is acceptable behaviour, and this undermines the school's provision for moral development and weakens the message it conveys to the school population as a whole.

45. Provision for social development is good. It is helped by the programme for personal, social and health education and by opportunities for pupils in Years 10 and 11 to attend work experience placements and local colleges. Within lessons, pupils are frequently challenged to work together in pairs and groups. The social use of language programme makes a very good contribution to the development of pupils' social skills; it pushes the boundaries of what they find comfortable and supports their social communication very effectively. The ASDAN Towards Independence course requires pupils to work together, as in a drama lesson where they experimented with theatrical make-up, and contributes a great deal to the development of their social skills. Pupils' social horizons are extended through trips out, for instance, through Variety Club trips and other visits, and through challenging residential experiences in Years 7, 9 and 11. Pupils' social skills are further developed by involvement in local and national sporting competitions, and by opportunities to work alongside pupils from mainstream schools in a two-day drama and performance workshop in Year 9. Pupils have opportunities to contribute to fundraising and to helping others within school, for instance, pupils in Years 10 and 11 help younger pupils with their reading and pupils work as library monitors. There are currently no opportunities for pupils to exercise responsibility or take initiative in helping others in the local community or beyond.
46. Provision for cultural development is good. It is effectively supported, for example, through visits to the school by theatre companies and outings to museums, trips out to the Tomorrow's World Exhibition and the Houses of Parliament in Year 10, to St. Paul's Cathedral in Year 11 and involvement in the Tower Building Competition in Year 9. Music makes a good contribution to cultural development, for instance, through the study of the instrumental music of Eastern Europe and Australasia, and the folk songs of the United Kingdom, the United States and Europe. Similarly, in art, pupils learn about the work of a number of artists and designers, and have opportunities to visit galleries and exhibitions. This is extended through the ASDAN course, where pupils consider, for example, Aborigine art and the way visual art is used to express feelings and beliefs. History includes some consideration of gender and race within social history, but this tends to be limited to the United Kingdom and Europe. In religious education, pupils have very good opportunities to learn about a range of cultures through the study of different belief systems. In food technology, parents have contributed to pupils learning about the foods of a range of cultures. Projects based around the library include celebration of festivals, including the Chinese New Year. Otherwise, references to non-western culture are fairly limited and the school could do more to prepare pupils for life in a multicultural society. It has not yet devised a policy setting out how it intends to educate pupils in issues concerning race.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

47. The school has good procedures for child protection, health and safety and for the welfare of its pupils. The procedures for monitoring and encouraging attendance are very good. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour are good. Monitoring and supporting of pupils' personal development is satisfactory.

48. The school has a team of four people, who have all had appropriate training, to deal with child protection procedures. This works well and a range of safeguards have been built into the already comprehensive procedures to improve them. All procedures are complied with and the four main principles of the Children Act are understood. Health and safety procedures are good and governors are involved in the inspection process. Regular checks are made of portable electrical equipment; fire and gym equipment and fire procedures are fully in place. The last inspection criticised the school for not having a Health and Safety Policy and identified a few health and safety hazards. The school now has a good policy and no hazards were identified during the inspection.
49. The staff know the students well and provide satisfactory support for them during the school day. Among the good features are the number and variety of specialist visitors to the school. These include the school nurse, an outside counsellor, someone who provides valuable help for students with specific learning difficulties, speech and language therapists, occupational and physiotherapists, the educational psychologist and the Behaviour Support Service. All of these are of considerable help in supporting the students' learning.
50. The procedures for promoting and monitoring attendance have improved considerably since the last inspection and are now very good. Absences are reported to the parents at the first opportunity and good rewards are given to improve students' attendance. The attendance team and the E.W.O are to be congratulated on the improvement in the attendance figures and particularly for the reduction in unauthorised absences.
51. The school has a good behaviour policy, which works well in the majority of cases when it is properly applied. In a minority of cases and particularly with students with emotional and behavioural difficulties, the procedures are not as effective. However, parents feel that behaviour has improved in the last few years.
52. Pupils' records are kept efficiently and provide a good account of their personal development and achievements. Students' annual reports are of a good standard and tell parents what their children are doing, are good at and identify areas for improvement. Some parents would like more detailed information about what is happening in their child's class. Otherwise, parents are satisfied.
53. The assessment and monitoring of pupils' academic progress is satisfactory. The school has developed a common assessment policy, which is an improvement since the previous inspection. The use made of assessment to support learning is, however, insufficient. Individual learning targets are not always set and even where these exist they are not used to aid the planning of lessons.
54. The arrangements for assessing pupils' attainments and progress in different subjects vary from unsatisfactory to very good. For some subjects teachers use precise measures whereas for other subjects teachers' records are too simplistic. For example assessment procedures for physical education and French are very good. In physical education teachers analyse each aspect of pupils' work, and do so for each unit. Then teachers take an overview annually, to measure long-term progress. The assessment arrangements used in geography are unsatisfactory because they record only broad views about attainment and effort. This is also true for design and technology, and science, for Years 7, 8 and 9. However, for these two subjects - and for English and mathematics - assessment procedures used for the work of pupils in Years 10 and 11 are good, because systems are based around the needs of the external accreditation process. Pupils are involved in assessing their own work, for some of their subjects, and for aspects of personal development.

55. Whole school assessment procedures are satisfactory. The school has ample data about pupils' attainment before they join the school, and then measures attainment and effort regularly. The school sets overall targets and measures the extent of progress toward them. The arrangements to be used to track how well each pupil performs against personal targets are unsatisfactory. Previous arrangements have lapsed. A new system is being started for Years 9 and 10, and will soon be applied to other years. However, the school has a full picture of pupils' personal strengths and weaknesses. This picture includes good information about patterns of behaviour.
56. The information from the assessment systems is used satisfactorily, to guide curriculum planning. The best feature is the effective use to take pupils in Years 10 and 11 to success in their external accreditation. Pupils' progress toward maturity and their preparedness for adult life is monitored well by assessment systems linked to personal, social and health education, and to the Youth Award scheme. The weakness in use of assessment information is that some subjects have too little information, because they have restricted formal assessment to the grading of attainment and effort. This grading system is not referenced to any baseline. Thus some teachers do not judge if the curriculum they offered was good enough, or not. The school assessment, marking and feedback policy is not securing enough precision. However, a good proportion of subjects usefully exceeds the demands of the policy.
57. At the time of the last inspection, the school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development was identified as a key issue for development. The school has made satisfactory improvement and overall provision for pupils' personal development is now good.
58. The school has developed a good careers programme, which starts in Year 9. Very good use is made of the ASDAN Scheme and modules and of the assessment procedures. Work shadowing is undertaken in Year 10 and is followed by a wide range of work experience opportunities in Year 11 with the assistance of Connexions. Records of Achievement are well kept and their importance and the presentation is stressed by the careers team. There are good relationships with local colleges and a wide range of courses is provided for the pupils. These include life skills courses, work-based courses and many vocational courses, such as hotel and catering, sport and leisure, electrical and motor mechanics. A more recent venture includes a Construction Industry Training Board subsidised range of courses, for example, carpentry, bricklaying and painting and decorating. Careers education and guidance was regarded as good at the last inspection. It has been further developed since then and is continuing to develop and helps the students considerably to transfer to college, training or work.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

59. The school has satisfactory links with the parents who are largely satisfied with the work of the school. The school keeps parents adequately informed about events at the school and about their children's progress. Parents contribute satisfactorily to their children's learning at school and at home.
60. The parents who responded to the inspector's enquiries are supportive of the school and are happy with standards. They have strong concerns about the lack of homework and have slight concerns about behaviour, information about progress and the range of activities outside lessons being provided. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting are similarly supportive but also felt that there needed to be more homework. Some of the parents had concerns about their children not being sufficiently challenged (mainly those of students who had been transferred from mainstream schools). They felt that behaviour had improved in the last few years. They told us that the reputation of the school had improved and that the staff are committed and dedicated. Some of the parents said they would like more detailed information about work in the classroom.
61. The inspection team agrees that there is insufficient homework, especially for the older students. Behaviour is good overall, with the exception of one or two incidents with emotionally and behaviour disturbed students. There are sufficient activities outside lessons provided by the school. The level of challenge for students in the school is appropriate in the vast majority of cases but one or two of the higher ability students could be stretched more.
62. The last inspection was critical of the school's links with parents. They have improved since then and there are now parent governors and there is a Friends of Garston Manor School Association. The Friends have one successful fund-raising event each year at Christmas. This raises a considerable amount of money, which is used to buy equipment for the school.
63. Information for parents has improved since the last inspection and there is now a regular newsletter called the "Garston Gossip", which keeps parents in touch with events in the school. Together with the School Prospectus and Annual Governors' Report to Parents, they are provided with lots of information, but there is little evidence of them being notified in detail what is being taught in the classrooms. Annual Student Reports are, however, of a good standard and identify areas for improvement.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

64. Leadership is good and there have been notable improvements since the last inspection. The headteacher has thought deeply about the values that he believes should inform the education of pupils with special educational needs, many of whom lack confidence in themselves as successful learners. These values are expressed in the school's vision statement. This emphasises the need to provide a safe, caring environment where all are valued and can express themselves without fear of ridicule, with stimulating, challenging and interesting learning opportunities. The vision statement also commits the school to establish an atmosphere where all members of the school community are enabled to feel positively about themselves. These beliefs and values are strongly supported by the deputy headteacher and the senior managers of the school and in principle by all who work in it.

65. However, not all teachers fully comply with the school's behaviour policy and some prefer to rely on their own methods of maintaining discipline and managing their class. This undermines the effectiveness of the policy and is contrary to the school's aims.
66. Within this context, the school is moving forward, developing a broader, more relevant range of learning experiences for its pupils and answering the challenge posed by significant change in the range of special educational needs that it must meet. The support given by the deputy head in leading the school is of high quality and is a crucial element in motivating and enabling staff to develop their skills and give of their best.
67. Parents have confidence in the headteacher and see him as a great enthusiast who works tirelessly for their children. Management is satisfactory. The school's strategic planning is detailed but the time frame chosen for the school improvement plan is too brief. In addition, the analysis of pupils' performance is not fully used to set specific targets for school improvement and to devise plans and strategies for this. Strategic management is therefore satisfactory. Ensuring that all staff are fully committed to the realisation of the school's vision statement and aims and objectives, in the way in which the headteacher, senior managers and governors wish, is the single greatest challenge for management at this time. In particular, this applies to interactions with pupils and the management of their behaviour.
68. Governors are very supportive. Until recently they have been under strength but are now at required numbers. They carry out their statutory duties in most instances, attend meetings and maintain some oversight over the curriculum and the budget. They have not, however, taken steps to ensure that a daily corporate act of worship is held. They are particularly concerned to ensure the welfare of pupils, the maintenance of the premises and improvements to the learning environment. They tend to respond to the ideas and suggestions that arise from the professional staff rather than taking some initiative in setting the directions of the school. In a further example, little use has been made by the governors of the National Curriculum data that compares the performance of the school's core population of pupils with moderate learning difficulties with others in similar schools. The school's target setting process is based on attendance and GCSE points score statistics at age 16 rather than on any challenging targets arising from measured progress using a fine graded assessment scale. A suitable scale would be the national P scales for pupils aged 11 to 16. Because the performance of pupils is not well known to the governors, either in comparison to pupils in similar settings or in relation to pupils' own previous rate of learning, they cannot compare the school's performance with that of other schools neither can they challenge themselves to improve the performance.
69. Comparison and challenge are key elements in the principles that govern the search for best value. Without making greater use of the data available to them, governors cannot be sure that their financial decisions are having the desired impact. The extent to which principles of best value are applied is therefore unsatisfactory.
70. The school has a good performance management strategy. This enables performance targets to be set for the headteacher, senior staff and all teachers. Such targets are in place and the quality of teaching is monitored closely through lesson observations and the evaluation of planning. These processes have led to an improvement in teaching quality, the planning of what is to be taught and learned and how it is to be assessed.

71. There is, despite some remaining minor difficulties, a clear sense of purpose to leadership and management within the school. Steps have been taken to make more effective use of resources and the budget surplus that formerly existed has been systematically used to improve provision, for example, setting up an ICT room. The projected surplus, including carry over, for next year is within advised limits.
72. The governors, headteacher and staff have the will and capacity to address the outstanding issues and move the school forward successfully and incrementally.
73. The school is staffed with sufficient teachers and support assistants to meet the demands of the curriculum. In many, but not all areas, teachers are specialists in the subjects they teach and several teachers have a specialist qualification in the teaching of pupils with special educational needs. Support staff, including special needs assistants, the librarian and the technician, make a good, and, on occasion, excellent contribution to pupils' learning. The administrative, cleaning and care-taking staff contribute very effectively to the smooth day-to-day running of the school. Satisfactory use is made of information and communication technology for administrative and management purposes.
74. The school has effective arrangements for staff development: teachers and support staff have good opportunities to attend courses to further improve their practice. There are satisfactory systems for linking professional development to whole school development priorities, as well as to departmental target areas. The system for the induction of new teachers is effective.
75. Although some classrooms are small for groups of older pupils, accommodation is good overall and supports pupils' progress. It is well maintained and provides a clean, pleasant environment in which to learn. Whilst the school has fairly limited indoor space for physical education, it has excellent outdoor provision. Spacious accommodation is provided for food technology and for resistant materials. Science accommodation is of a good size and supports pupils' learning effectively, though the space is somewhat awkward. There is a good specialist room for art and design.
76. Learning resources are satisfactory. The library provides very well for pupils' learning; it is well stocked with books and other resources, and pupils' learning benefits from the added enrichment of books from the Schools Library Service. Library skills sessions make an excellent contribution to the development of pupils' learning skills, and a range of other activities organised by the librarian contributes very well to pupils' learning and development. English makes use of the library for reading lessons and regular events, such as the Readathon, support pupils' learning. Provision for information and communication technology is satisfactory across the school and there has been good improvement in the provision of computers since the last inspection. The school has a computer suite, videos, video and digital cameras, overhead projectors, CD-ROMs and audio-visual tapes. However, it has little software or specialised technology to support pupils with communication difficulties, and provision of ICT within classrooms is limited. Some equipment is old or prone to technical problems. For instance, computer equipment is inadequate in science and limited in English. In contrast, ICT is built into the school's provision for resistant materials and makes a very good contribution to pupils' progress. Books and other learning materials are at least sufficient in most subjects. In geography, resources are out of date, there is only a small range of CD-ROMs and one broken computer: pupils' experiences and teaching methods are narrowed as a result. In modern languages, where resources are well organised and improving, learning is supported by a good collection of tapes and objects of reference.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

77. In order to build on the improvements that it has already made and to ensure that its pupils have every chance to achieve their best, the headteacher, senior managers and staff should:

- (1) Make full use of the opportunity that homework provides to develop pupils' skills as independent learners, by :
 - (a) ensuring that it is regularly set;
 - (b) ensuring that homework diaries are kept up-to-date, checked by teachers and that they are signed by parents.(Paragraphs 28, 29, 60, 61, 82, 88, 96, 101)
- (2) Produce as quickly as possible a strategy for setting individual targets for each pupil in the key learning skills and ensure that these are used effectively by:
 - (a) involving pupils and their parents in the target setting process;
 - (b) keeping a clear record of pupils' progress towards their targets and reviewing and refining targets regularly;
 - (c) referring to these targets when planning lessons.(Paragraph 11, 42, 58, 60, 94, 95, 99, 109)
- (3) Improve teachers' understanding of and compliance with the school's behaviour management policy and the usefulness of the policy by:
 - (a) rigorously monitoring how effectively and consistently it is applied;
 - (b) offering relevant in-service training;
 - (c) giving guidance on the different approaches necessary to managing the challenging behaviour of some pupils.(Paragraph 1, 14, 15, 28, 36, 51, 65, 66, 67, 82, 99, 104, 142)

The governors should carry out their duties more effectively by:

- (a) ensuring that they play a fuller part in setting the school's priorities
 - (b) making better use of available data so that they can see how the school compares with others of a similar kind
 - (c) taking measures so that all statutory requirements are complied with
- (Paragraph numbers 68 and 69)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	69
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	29

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	10	26	27	3	0	0
Percentage	4.34	14.49	37.68	39.13	4.34	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	108
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	36

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
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	0

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	10.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	2.4

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	1
Indian	2
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	96
Any other minority ethnic group	6

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	15	0
Other minority ethnic groups	1	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	7.7
Average class size	11

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	250

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	864,443
Total expenditure	936,939
Expenditure per pupil	8,440
Balance brought forward from previous year	146,487
Balance carried forward to next year	73,991

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2.2
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	108
Number of questionnaires returned	41 (38%)

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	39	56	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	34	56	7	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	22	59	10	0	10
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	12	41	32	10	2
The teaching is good.	37	56	0	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	34	56	10	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	66	29	2	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	54	41	0	2	2
The school works closely with parents.	39	46	7	2	5
The school is well led and managed.	66	34	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	51	39	2	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	27	46	10	5	10

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

ENGLISH

78. Pupils' overall achievement is good; progress is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9, and good in Years 10 and 11. Pupils develop their communication and literacy skills from a low base on entry in Year 7 to a point where they are able to achieve some success, either at GCSE or more often in the Certificate of Achievement, by the time they leave. The school makes very good provision for pupils with specific learning difficulties and those pupils in Year 7 who have the most severe learning difficulties are making good progress. There is no marked difference between the overall attainment of girls and boys, although girls tend to make better progress than boys in some classes as they generally behave better.
79. By the end of Year 9, average attaining pupils know how to blend some consonants at the beginning and end of words, and use this knowledge in spelling and reading. They enjoy books and read simple texts with reasonable accuracy. They use reference books to gather basic information. In the study of literary texts, they are able to comment on the plot and the actions of main characters. In their writing, they include some descriptions and can build a simple character profile or express their ideas on a theme that they have studied. They speak confidently on familiar subjects and listen carefully to instructions or to others' points of view. The spelling of higher attaining pupils is generally phonetically plausible, although they are confused at times about the structure of some common words. They normally use capital letters and full stops correctly, and have a fair understanding of speech marks, apostrophes and contractions. Handwriting is satisfactory. Sometimes, they join their letters, but not consistently so. They write at a simple level for a range of purposes, sequencing their ideas, and most often producing work that relates to events and characters in class texts. In their study of 'Macbeth', they are able to fill in missing words and write a few sentences about the plot. They discuss characters, express opinions and present ideas to a group using a growing range of vocabulary, but are not able to structure their ideas as well in writing, partly because confusion about grammatical structures undermines their written expression. They read aloud fluently and expressively, with varied intonation, sometimes adopting different voices for different characters. The written work of lower attaining pupils is fragmented, with many gaps that indicate absence from school. These pupils tend to be reluctant to read aloud in class or read hesitantly, and offer few comments about class texts.
80. In Years 7 to 9, the curriculum and teaching have not been developed sufficiently to ensure that pupils make consistently good progress but it is satisfactory. There are some very good and even excellent initiatives, such as the intensive literacy programme in Year 7 that is led by the teacher for specific learning difficulties. Also, the social use of language course and the inclusion of library skills sessions make very good contributions to the development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. Equally, some lessons focusing on literacy during the inspection were barely satisfactory and, in one case, teaching and learning were unsatisfactory. Most pupils make better progress in reading than in writing. The school places particular emphasis on the development of pupils' reading skills: the inclusion of reading sessions within tutor time two mornings a week and the introduction of a 'buddy system', where older pupils support younger ones in their reading, contribute significantly to pupils' progress. The study of literature within English lessons leads to good progress in pupils' ability to respond to set texts. In English, pupils have some opportunities to write for a range of

purposes, but a good deal of time in Years 8 and 9 is taken up with work on spelling and grammar, most often through the use of worksheets. The identification of individual literacy targets is imprecise, and so, work in these lessons is not matched appropriately to the varying learning needs within the class. Higher attaining pupils, in particular, make less progress than they should in lessons where work provides insufficient challenge for them. Pupils produce a greater wealth of writing in some other subjects of the curriculum than in English. For instance, they write at considerable length and depth in religious education, and make very good progress in their use of subject specialist vocabulary for use in recording information in science. There is no system for co-ordinating an approach to literacy across the curriculum, or for developing skills that can be transferred from one subject to another. The lack of such a system impacts adversely on pupils' progress in writing and to a lesser extent in the development of their skills of comprehension.

81. Pupils make good progress in Years 10 and 11, benefiting a great deal from the structure and challenge provided by examination courses. In their study of literature, pupils' progress is good, and they develop their speaking and listening skills well in English and through the drama element of the ASDAN course. By the end of Year 11, most pupils achieve a pass, merit or distinction in the Certificate of Achievement; a minority are successful at GCSE. Average attaining pupils organise their writing in paragraphs, and express their ideas in a logical sequence, but they depend on a great deal of redrafting. Stretches of their writing make sense, but uncertainties about words and expression creep in at times and the meaning of writing becomes confused. Spelling of common words is generally correct, including some polysyllabic words. Handwriting is joined and legible. In their reading, these pupils show knowledge of main events and express their opinions about the plot and characters. They are beginning to read independently, read simple texts with understanding and can locate information with some help. They speak clearly about a range of topics, and listen carefully, responding with appropriate comments. Higher attaining pupils write at greater length and engage the reader's interest. Spelling is generally accurate and ideas are organised logically in paragraphs. The most able pupils are avid and fluent readers who enjoy reading for pleasure and are confident in using books for research. They are able to use appropriate strategies to tackle difficult texts and to establish the meaning of relatively complex vocabulary. They are confident, fluent speakers who vary the tone and style of their speech. They are aware of Standard English and know when to use it. Lower attaining pupils read aloud and can express their views about central themes and events in a set text. They produce short pieces of writing but can only extend their ideas with support. They usually include full stops but are unclear about what constitutes a sentence. They make some use of capital letters, although they are not clear about when, and when not, to use them. When making notes without support, writing is barely comprehensible and there is confusion between words with similar sounds, such as 'called' and 'could'. These pupils are able to listen and respond appropriately, and organise their ideas sufficiently to give a presentation to an audience on a topic they have prepared.
82. Teaching is good overall. About half the teaching is good or better in Years 10 and 11 and half is satisfactory. There is wide variation, however, in the quality of teaching in Years 7 to 9, where teaching ranges from excellent to unsatisfactory, and is most often either good or just satisfactory. The best teaching occurs within the context of a structured course, such as the intensive literacy course in Year 7, the social use of language programme in Year 8, and the library skills course provided in Year 7. In a lesson that was part of the literacy course in Year 7, pupils made rapid progress in reading and spelling, as a result of excellent organisation by the teacher for specific learning difficulties and work that was precisely matched to their learning needs. At the

end of the lesson, they spontaneously applauded one another's success and thanked the teachers for their input. Pupils with the greatest level of special educational needs in Year 7 made excellent progress in a library skills lessons led by the librarian, because she managed their behaviour exceptionally well, had high expectations, excellent understanding of pupils' learning needs and matched work exactly to the needs of different pupils in the class. They responded very well and experienced obvious enjoyment in learning. Where teaching is good, the teacher challenges pupils with some effective questions, manages their behaviour well, has a warm relationship with them, and provides support to individuals. In the unsatisfactory lesson during the inspection and in some other lessons that were satisfactory but contained shortcomings, work was not matched sufficiently to the different learning needs or prior attainment of pupils in the class, the pace was slow, there was heavy reliance on worksheets and behaviour was not managed firmly enough. Although pupils in Years 10 and 11 complete more homework than pupils lower down the school, expectations for homework could generally be higher.

83. The co-ordinator for English works hard and provides satisfactory leadership for the subject. Some good initiatives, such as the introduction of drama, the establishment of the 'buddy system' for reading and the provision of an excellent newsletter for parents, have been introduced since the last inspection. Moreover, systems of accreditation, through the GCSE and Certificate of Achievement courses, have become well established. Neither of the main teachers in English are specialists in the subject: this has some impact on the progress pupils make, especially in Years 7 to 9, but both teachers have significant strengths which could be harnessed to the greater good of the pupils. Curriculum planning is satisfactory, with a need for further development in Years 7 to 9, and the subject development plan includes many ongoing issues rather than focusing on the actions which would have most impact on pupils' achievement. At present, there is no coherent system for teaching skills, knowledge and understanding to ensure progression from Years 7 to 9, or for the co-ordination of literacy across the curriculum. One of the teachers and the special educational needs assistants who support in English have been trained in the intensive literacy programme that is used in Year 7; standards could be raised by extending the programme into Years 8 and 9. Assessment is unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9, except for the exact assessment of pupils' learning needs within the intensive literacy programme in Year 7. The statutory assessment of pupils at the end of Year 9 is thorough, but individual targets lack precision and do not provide a means of measuring pupils' progress. Assessment in Years 10 and 11 follows examination board requirements appropriately to provide a detailed record of pupils' attainment and progress. ICT is used to support learning but pupils would benefit from more opportunities to use computers in the drafting and re-drafting of their work, and to support the presentation of final pieces of work.
84. Through the school's procedures for performance management there has been systematic monitoring of teaching and learning during the past two years. While this has been beneficial in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of individual teachers, the information gathered has not been used to best effect in allocating appropriate classes to those who teach English.

MATHEMATICS

85. Overall, the quality of provision in mathematics is good. Pupil attainment on entry to the school is well below the national average and remains below the national average throughout the time pupils undertake this subject. Achievement is good and overall, the majority of pupils make good progress in acquiring mathematical skills during their time at Garston Manor. Between the age of 11 and 14, many of pupils improve their

performance from around Level 2 of the National Curriculum to Level 4. Nevertheless, the learning needs of pupils and in particular their literacy skills do act as a barrier to learning and although progress is satisfactory for 14 – 16 year old pupils, the majority are not able to cope with a GCSE programme, though the opportunities for this are in place for any pupil able to access this level of provision. Most pupils currently follow a well – considered Certificate of Education Achievement programme. Although there are no national comparators for attainment within this externally accredited course, it matches the learning needs of pupils well in the areas of number, measurement and mathematical investigation.

86. By the age of 14, pupils can undertake simple computation in number and use a basic calculator. They are aware of place value, higher attainers carry out addition and subtraction to 100 and can multiply and divide numbers up to 20. Higher attaining pupils add mentally but the majority of pupils still need concrete aids to add. Lower attaining pupils make at least satisfactory and usually better progress in measuring time, including use of the twenty four-hour clock. Similarly estimation skills, for example in estimating length develop well, particularly for those of average ability and above. Pupils experience data handling through such means as traffic surveys and tallying exercises and more able pupils can produce bar and pie charts. By the end of their time at school, pupils can understand simple probability. The majority of pupils can name simple shapes, show line symmetry, calculate the area and perimeter of simple shapes and understand basic angles and how they are calculated. Pupils are aware of and can use simple mathematical language in a minority of cases but literacy skills within the subject are currently weak.
87. Attitudes and behaviour are good and the majority of pupils respond well to the teacher and teaching environment. The relationships pupils have with teachers are generally good. Pupils settle quickly in the classroom. They concentrate well and persevere with the tasks and challenges given. Pupils take care with their work and the quality of presentation is good, reflecting the expectation teachers have. When given the opportunities to work collaboratively, for example in work in a class observed which was studying angles, pupils usually co-operate well.
88. Teaching and learning are good. There is a good emphasis on basic numeracy skills and the curriculum makes use of features of the 'numeracy hour', for example to develop mental arithmetic for pupils of all ages. This could usefully be extended further, particularly for pupils aged 11 – 14. Question and answer sessions are well handled by teachers, for example in work on mental arithmetic and symmetry. A carefully developed small steps approach ensures that mathematical skills are usually well consolidated and they help pupils with the recall of previous work. The use of time is well managed and all lessons observed allowed sufficient time for plenary sessions to review progress and set some pointers for the next lesson. The use of homework within the subject is under-developed. Learning support assistants are well briefed and are particularly effective in 1:1 work, for example in activities aimed at developing estimation skills. All staff are sensitive to the need to maintain the self – esteem and confidence of pupils in both theoretical and practical work, such as that observed on shape with a Year 8 class. Learning is at its best when theoretical and practical and applied work are combined and when pupils are given the opportunity to talk about their experiences. It is also stimulated by the appropriate use of information and communication technology and this is done through use of a range of software, and use of the control elements of Roamers and Logo.
89. Leadership and management are good and there is a clear vision for the further development of the subject with developing links with outside agencies to take the

teaching of mathematics forward. Teaching and learning are well monitored as part of the school's performance management strategy. Schemes of work are kept under continual review and are closely matched to the requirements of the National Curriculum. The use of appropriate vocabulary within extended mathematical work such as that dealing with performance measurement in athletics is underdeveloped and the subject co-ordinator is aware of this. The breadth and balance of the curriculum is satisfactory although there is an over emphasis on number between the ages of 11 and 14. Work on shape space and measures could be made more relevant to real world problem solving. Between the ages of 14 and 16 however, there is a greater emphasis on investigative work and in particular, the handling of data.

90. Resources are good and enable pupils of all ages to access the mathematics curriculum well. There is a plentiful supply of artefacts and apparatus, for example to undertake the study of symmetry. In the lessons observed the use of cubes and computer software added to the interest and enjoyment of pupils. Textbooks are in good condition and are of good quality and this supports an appropriate learning ethos in lessons.
91. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The strengths identified in the last report have been maintained. In particular, the curriculum is well managed and there is a well-founded 'small steps' approach to the teaching of skills and this enables pupils to make good progress, especially between the ages of 11 and 14. To improve further, the school should place more emphasis on the acquisition and reinforcement of relevant literacy skills to enable deeper understanding and more confident application of mathematical concepts by pupils. Mathematical targets for pupils need to be more precise and systems whereby they are communicated and reviewed should be strengthened.

SCIENCE

92. The standards achieved are satisfactory. In their first three years at the school pupils make good progress. They improve their knowledge and understanding of scientific investigation. For example, by the end of Year 9 pupils measure and record data well, if they are given tables for their results. They understand, with much help, how to organise data to find patterns so as to explain what they find. They achieve well over the full range of the science curriculum, that is life processes, materials, physical processes. For example, Year 9 use what they know about force fields to explain how magnets work, which is better than the common sense knowledge they had in Year 7, just that magnets attract and repel. Achievement for the current pupils in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory. Results from previous years show that Year 11 pupils attained well, with impressive results for most in Entry Level Certificates, and good attainment in GCSE for some. Staff changes during the year leading up to the inspection, including a period with temporary staff, explain why the work given in the current period was satisfactory, compared to the better achievement in previous years.
93. Overall the provision is of the same standard as that described in the previous report, though details differ. Pupils understand science better now, during Years 7, 8 and 9, but their attitudes are less consistently good than was then reported. The accommodation and its use have improved, with better facilities to teach the full range of investigative and practical science.
94. The quality of learning and teaching is good. Teachers are expert about science, and present interesting lessons with high expectations about how much pupils can learn. Because of this pupils make good, and sometimes very good, gains in knowledge and

understanding. Plenty of challenging work is set, and most pupils work at a good pace. They are willing to make the effort to follow the ideas. This strategy suits high-attaining pupils well. Lower-attaining pupils concentrate well and are keen to succeed but more needs to be done for such pupils, especially in helping them to learn and remember technical terms. At present, teachers' planning of science is good. However, there is too little done to develop pupils' literacy skills within the subject. Pupils' behaviour and concentration are good and unsatisfactory behaviour is rare and confined to a very few pupils. The strategies used by teachers and support staff are consistent, well organised and effective.

95. The subject is effectively led by the co-ordinator and the curriculum now in place gives full and effective coverage of National Curriculum science. The good use of accredited qualifications is a strong boost to provision as pupils start their final two years at the school. Teachers test pupils regularly to find out how much pupils know and understand but the records lack detail about achievements for lower-attaining pupils. Pupils' attainments are tested regularly but full use is not made of the information gained from this in planning work for those in Years 7, 8 and 9. The resources for science benefit achievement. The science room is of adequate size and has separate areas for experiments, and for writing and discussion. There is a science technician, so it is possible to provide plenty of scientific investigations, even complex work but the current information and communication technology facilities for science need improvement. The school knows this and is ready to act.

ART AND DESIGN

96. Achievement is satisfactory overall, though it is better in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 7 to 9. Standards are similar to those reported at the last inspection. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 produce good work within some projects, for instance, in their final necktie designs, and there are some good individual pieces of work in pupils' folders. They do not sustain this quality of work, however, and their overall progress is adversely affected by their reluctance to apply themselves for any length of time and by the disinterest many pupils show in completing homework.
97. By the end of Year 9, higher attaining pupils are working close to national expectations in some aspects of their practical work. They work well in tone and when blending colour using water-based crayons; they show some visual discernment in collecting images to a given theme. The work of average and lower attaining pupils is much more fragmented, mostly through lack of application. Within individual pieces of work, they show that they have potential, but their folders contain many little experiments with techniques and unfinished work that has not led systematically to more finished pieces. Although working to set themes and producing a fair amount of work from Years 7 to 9, there is not the coherent body of work that could reasonably be expected over three years.
98. By the end of Year 11, pupils taking GCSE have developed practical skills with colour in painting, printing and drawing, and produce some sensitive line drawing in pencil. They are able to engage in simple research on a well-known artist, for example, copying pictures by Van Gogh and writing a very small amount about a given artist. They collect visual reference material and produce a fair range of preparatory work. There are glimmers of high quality work, for example, in tonal drawing, but pupils do not sustain this quality throughout a project or do nearly enough work at home to gain higher grades at GCSE. Some drawing is tentative and pupils are much more confident in working from secondary sources than from direct observation. They are able, however, to make good use of an artist's style to support the development of their own ideas.

99. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, but pupils' negative attitudes undermine some lessons. The teacher's subject knowledge is good, both technically and in her knowledge of the work of other artists. This is most evident in Years 10 and 11, where teaching supports the development of work to GCSE. Lessons are well organised and pupils' behaviour is managed well, so that the teacher maintains control of the class even when pupils' attitudes are unsatisfactory or occasionally poor. Demonstrations and explanations provide pupils with valuable information, and the teacher and support assistants are continually available to support and encourage pupils in their practical work. Planning for lessons is satisfactory but makes insufficient use of assessment information about pupils' prior attainment. Expectations are high in relation to work and application. In order to realise the teacher's expectations, work sometimes needs to be more precisely structured and broken down into small steps for lower attaining pupils. This is particularly the case for pupils in Year 7.
100. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 show positive attitudes in lessons and say that they are enjoying the GCSE course. They pay careful attention to the teacher's demonstrations and pupils who exhibit challenging behaviour in some other lessons behave respectfully in art. In Years 7 to 9, some pupils concentrate well on their practical work but occasionally lessons are disrupted by the unsatisfactory behaviour and a lack of interest in learning of one or two pupils.
101. There has been satisfactory improvement in art since the last inspection. Teaching and learning are monitored regularly. Curriculum planning is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9: projects relate appropriately to the National Curriculum, particularly to the coverage of elements of art, such as tone, line, colour, form and texture. The curriculum supports the development of basic skills in two and three dimensions. Pupils are given some opportunities to work with ICT and to manipulate digitised images; there is one computer in the art room but limited access to the computer suite during art lessons. The teacher is aware of the need for pupils to collect more visual reference material and is working to this end with the youngest pupils. All pupils would benefit from learning more skills of speaking, and subsequently writing, about the work of other artists and, indeed, about their own work. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 relates closely to examination syllabus requirements, and pupils have opportunities to go on visits, for instance, to a local garden, to exhibitions and museums, and this helps to extend their visual awareness. Assessment is sound and pupils' attainment is regularly recorded. The subject is well resourced and the teacher has collected exciting images to support the teaching of various projects. There is a light box and a kiln makes it possible to develop pupils' skills in three dimensions through clay. An art 'shop' has been established, selling materials at cost price in an attempt to encourage pupils to complete their homework. This is a very positive development but has not, so far, resolved the problem of the non-completion of homework.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

102. The standards achieved are good. By the end of Year 9 pupils know and understand a good deal more than when they started at the school. For example, as they study textiles pupils soon learn to machine stitch, skilfully; by Year 9 they can design and finish clothing to a standard they can be proud of. In work with wood and other hard materials they become competent with a good range of tools, mark out and measure well, and develop a good understanding of the design process. Pupils' understanding of design improves well, over their first three years. A further example is that during Year 7 pupils make dishes, such as fruit salad; during Year 9 they complete background studies about diet, sources of food, and manufacturing methods as well as making more complex dishes. A very few pupils in Year 7, those with complex learning

difficulties, achieve satisfactorily rather than well. The school could do more to plan for the needs of these pupils. In their final two years, up to the end of Year 11, pupils maintain their good increases in knowledge and understanding. The key strength is that they succeed in accredited courses. Most pupils leave with Entry Level Certificates. In addition all students who opt for Food Studies pass the City and Guilds Food Hygiene Certificate.

103. The provision is now much better than that reported after the previous inspection. Progress overall is better, especially the successes with externally accredited courses for pupils in Years 10 and 11. The facilities are much improved with a fine new room for food studies and textiles, and a modernised and safer workshop.
104. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Teachers know their subject well and therefore teach effectively, capturing the pupils' interest. As a consequence most pupils work at a good pace. They show a good capacity for independent work. Pupils rely on staff for advice but only for difficult tasks. The key strength of the teaching is the very detailed project planning that underpins each lesson. This means that the needs of most pupils are met well. The methods used by teachers to manage pupils are good and include productive feedback about what to do next and how to improve. Teachers and support staff collaborate very well. The only exception to this is in graphics, for Years 10 and 11, where the pace of work is too slow, so that the effort and concentration of pupils becomes unsatisfactory. The high quality work in textiles, food studies and resistant materials by years 10 and 11 shows that these pupils make very good efforts to give of their best. However, the needs of pupils with more complex difficulties are not always well met. Learning is helped by the way staff separate practical and theory work.
105. Teachers record progress for Years 7, 8 and 9 but what is attained is not always related to National Curriculum levels. They make use of this information when planning the next work for Years 7, 8 and 9.
106. Leadership and management in the subject are effective and there have been tangible improvements in provision. The specialist rooms, available for most of the design and technology provision, are used very well. There is enough equipment, and plenty of space, so that pupils have easy access. There is sufficient access to information and communication technology for this to be used well to support learning, especially in the workshop. The provision of two support staff with specific responsibilities for design and technology areas makes it possible for teachers to use the specialist facilities to very good effect. The curriculum balances designing and making very well, and provides an impressive range of types of technology for pupils, and with options to choose as pupils start Year 10. All work for Years 10 and 11 is accredited.

GEOGRAPHY

107. Standards of achievement in geography are satisfactory. Geography is taught as a separate subject in years 7, 8 and 9. In years 10 and 11 the humanities course is largely history, but there is a little geography in the Towards Independence ASDAN Expressive Arts course.
108. By the age of 14, pupils make satisfactory progress overall. They follow a published scheme of worksheets that covers plans, contour lines, land use, weather, water supply and floods, earthquakes and volcanoes, energy, South Africa and India. Higher achieving pupils understand the idea of inputs and outputs on a farm, and can draw simple graphs. Lower achieving pupils can name the different layers of the rainforest

but have difficulty with the idea of a plan of the school. All pupils gain in their factual knowledge and vocabulary, knowing the meaning of words such as population and resources. Pupils progress less well with geographical skills such as map reading and knowing what questions to ask in investigations and problem solving. Their local knowledge is poor. There is insufficient evidence to judge progress in geography by the age of 16.

109. Teaching is satisfactory overall. In those lessons where a number of activities are provided that suit the pupils' ability, for example, video clips or games, pupils learn well and teaching is effective. In many other lessons, however, the pace is slow and activities are stretched to fill a double lesson. Too much use is made of worksheets, which are too difficult for many pupils to tackle independently. When pupils have finished them and placed them in their exercise books as a record of what they have learned, some are unable to read them back. In addition, the information on some sheets is out of date. Higher achieving pupils are not well served by these methods. The scheme of work has a laudable emphasis on geographical enquiry and development of environmental understanding, but in reality lessons do not emphasise these things. Work is descriptive rather than questioning or looking for patterns and answers. There have been no opportunities for practical work for two years.
110. Where geography is taught as part of the ASDAN Expressive Arts course in Year 10, it is very good. The teacher transmits her enthusiasm for other cultures and provides artefacts, music and activities to stimulate the class.
111. Assessment is barely satisfactory. The school assessment scheme is used half termly but there is no assessment of what pupils know, understand and can do when they arrive from primary or secondary school. Assessment is not used to develop teaching materials to match pupils' abilities. Marking is regular but it does not indicate how pupils can improve their work.
112. Some pupils enjoy geography. Most of the time they are co-operative in lessons, but some older boys opt out. The youngest pupils respond best and take pride in knowing new words and facts about the world. In the Year 10 ASDAN lessons, pupils listen attentively and ask questions. They show surprise and delight at some of the things they learn. They respond to the teacher's enthusiasm by pursuing independent research in their own time on the Internet to supplement what they know.
113. Leadership of geography is unsatisfactory. Budgeting and the provision of resources are unsatisfactory. Opportunities are missed to make geography an exciting subject.
114. Since the last inspection the standard of teaching and learning has declined. The recommendation in the last inspection report that the commercial worksheets were being relied on too much has been ignored. There are now more geographical displays around the school, linked to current events, art and literature but the geography room itself lacks any uplifting images or displays of pupils' independent work.

HISTORY

115. Overall, provision in the subject is satisfactory. History is taught to both 11 – 14 year old pupils and those aged 14 to 16 as part of a combined humanities programme. No pupils have opted for this programme at Key Stage 4 from the current Year 9 pupil group. There was no teaching of the older age group to observe during the inspection period but scrutiny of work and discussion with the subject co-ordinator allowed judgements to be made.

116. In the work seen, pupils make satisfactory progress in relation to their attainment on entry to the School. Between the ages of 11 and 14, pupils begin to refine their sense of time and chronology. More able pupils can establish basic relationships concerning the dynastic politics leading to the Norman Conquest of 1066. They are able to discuss life in medieval towns. By age 14, more able pupils can understand cause and effect, for example in their study of the Second World War and the logistics of Hitler's strategy to invade Britain.
117. There is no evidence of matching work to pupils' ability in the work submitted for scrutiny and completed during this and the last academic year. In this work there is an over – dependence on the use of photocopied material, particularly commercially obtained worksheets which are not wholly appropriate to the teaching of topics either in the 11 to 14 or the 14 to 16 age phase.
118. Attitudes and behaviour are generally good and contribute positively to the steady accumulation of knowledge and understanding of pupils across the age groups. Pupils are keen to learn and are able to learn from each other when the opportunity of group work is given.
119. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teacher pupil relationships are positive. The teaching of basic literacy skills is satisfactory and there is an appropriate focus on the key historical vocabulary required in each of the topics studied. The pace of lessons is satisfactory and sufficient time allowed for specific activities. Work is regularly marked but comment is often sparse and targets are not set. As a result, pupils have limited knowledge of how they are progressing in the subject. There is insufficient use of pupil self-assessment. Although there is a satisfactory body of recorded work there is insufficient emphasis on the development of historical skills of enquiry. There are relatively few opportunities for extended writing for pupils of any age, for example at age 14 plus in the study of Britain's twentieth century social development.
120. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory and improvement since the last inspection is similarly unsatisfactory. There has been little attempt to introduce information and communication technology to the subject, despite the ready availability of resources to do so. As a consequence, the curriculum is unduly narrow for pupils of all ages and abilities. Schemes of work are rudimentary and take insufficient account of the need to develop historical skills as well as knowledge and understanding of particular topics. Although race and gender issues are covered satisfactorily for pupils aged 14 and above, the curriculum overall focuses over heavily on the history of Britain. Assessment arrangements are basic and are not linked to the National Curriculum. Teacher Assessment is undertaken at the end of Year 9 in line with national expectation but the results are not used to inform curriculum planning.
121. Resources are generally unsatisfactory although the subject is well funded. A significant financial surplus has been accumulated but despite this the two computers allocated are unusable and in need of repair. The supply of texts is adequate but there is an over-reliance on uninspiring photocopied worksheets and pupils do not have sufficient access to appropriate artefacts or good quality documentary source materials to support their acquisition of enquiry skills. This is particularly evident in the certificated course offered to older pupils.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

122. Pupils aged 11 to 14 attain standards that are a little below their mainstream counterparts, but some higher attaining pupils aged 14 to 16 attain as well as mainstream pupils.
123. By the age of 14 pupils make good progress. They can use a digital camera and download the images from disk to import into their documents. They understand how to use a spreadsheet and can change the data into a variety of graphs. Lower achieving pupils, while able to do the mechanics of this, do not understand the value of adding units to the axes. They can all do simple desktop publishing, and higher achieving pupils have produced multimedia work on foxhunting, getting information from the internet, importing images and adding their own text to make a newspaper article. Pupils with literacy difficulties are not achieving so well; they have the ICT skills, but are not aware of programs and helpful features of word processing programs that could make the burden of poor literacy lighter.
124. By the age of 16 pupils again make good progress despite not having had ICT in every year. They are able to interrogate a database, produce graphs and can explain the advantages of one program over another. They can set up a simple spreadsheet for stock control and produce business stationery. Higher achieving pupils can write at length about special effects in film. All pupils know about the application of computers in the wider world. Lower achieving pupils are still held back by poor literacy rather than ICT skills.
125. Teaching is satisfactory between Years 7 and 9, and good in Years 10 and 11. In the best lessons in Year 8, an email dialogue has been set up between a fighter pilot and pupils at the school. Tasks that could otherwise be boring, for example writing a standard letter, take on real meaning.
126. In a good Year 10 lesson the teacher had identified difficulties in a previous lesson and demonstrated, using technology to link pupils' individual networked screens, how these difficulties might be overcome. Challenging interesting work is set and pupils are encouraged to work independently.
127. Assessment is satisfactory. The commercially produced practical course in Year 7 has assessment built in. For older pupils, there are tests at the end of each unit of work to test knowledge. Skills are assessed regularly. Assessment could be improved by work being dated, and samples printed off at different stages of development. There are some good examples of self-assessment in year 9. The weakness is in how these assessments are used, particularly in year 7 where work is not always matched well to the wide ICT ability range of pupils.
128. Pupils are keen and younger pupils' confidence increases with the gentle encouragement of teaching and support staff. Pupils are happy to make mistakes and edit or re-design their work with help when necessary. They are persistent and most cope well with the inevitable frustrations when hardware goes wrong. Equipment is treated with respect. ICT club, two lunchtimes a week, is popular especially with the older pupils, for research on the Internet.
129. ICT is available to enhance teaching in other subjects and is used well in some but not all. This reflects some teachers' lack of confidence and also the lack of resources within some subjects. ICT is used well in design and technology (resistant materials) where it is an integral part of lesson planning. It is used for control and modelling. It is

also used in personal social and health education and in careers lessons for word processing. Internet research in ICT club feeds back into the Towards Independence ASDAN course. Elsewhere, there are occasional lessons using video clips and tape recorders, but on the whole ICT is not fully exploited. There is as yet no record of where ICT is being used in school, or suggestions where it could be used. In science it is used insufficiently and there is no data-logging equipment. In geography opportunities for first hand investigations are missed. Though resources are limited in some departments, the ICT suite, with Internet access, is often unused.

130. The subject is well led by a teacher with a clear development plan for the subject. An instructor with sufficient expertise teaches younger classes, and also acts as a technician. The ICT suite is small but very well designed and equipped to maximise the use of space. However ventilation is poor and it suffers from being a means of access to a technology room. Internet access is currently being extended to cover the school. There is no central audit of software and hardware, and this would be useful. All teachers are being trained as part of the New Opportunities Fund scheme.
131. Technology is used very efficiently in the administrative part of the school for information management and security, but there is no facility to share information across the school on pupils' progress or needs.
132. Since the last inspection all classes now have ICT lessons. A new scheme of work has been introduced that will lead to the Certificate of Achievement. This includes good coverage of all aspects of the course, but there is a danger that control technology, which comes at the end of the academic year, could be squeezed out if time was short. Year 7 pupils begin with an independent learning system on the computer that teaches them basic skills. On its own, this is leading to some underachievement because of insufficient initial assessment of what pupils know when they arrive in school. All pupils start at the same point and the pace does not suit the more able. This course needs to be evaluated and the use of initial assessment improved. The ICT suite has been upgraded.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

French

133. Standards of achievement in French are good. Speaking is a strength, and listening is satisfactory, but reading and writing are the weak areas because of the pupils' literacy difficulties.
134. By the age of 14 pupils make good progress. All pupils gain confidence with speaking and the highest achievers can talk about their preferences in clothes and give their opinions about sports. The lowest achievers can give simple directions and name 5 colours, the days of the week, and can say what their favourite clothes are. They are beginning to use tenses other than the present tense. All the pupils listen attentively to short taped dialogues and can pick out the main points, for example in understanding simple directions. They understand instructions in French in their lessons. While they are confident speakers with their teacher, they are bashful about answering questions from strangers. Lower attaining pupils sometimes find the speed of talking on tape difficult to follow and need to hear it more than once. Higher achieving pupils can read simple words and short phrases. Lower achieving pupils are struggling to read simple words- as they are in English. Writing is the weakest area and independent descriptive writing is difficult for all the pupils but they can copy short sentences accurately. As well as learning the French language, they are learning about the French way of life, and can also locate the major cities of France on a map.

135. Teaching is good overall. Each class has two lessons a week and no time is wasted. The pace is fast moving and there is a clear structure to each lesson with a variety of activities. Behaviour is managed well and all pupils are actively involved with the help of a support assistant. Pupils are rewarded with praise or points. The French course has been designed by the co-ordinator specifically with her pupils in mind and each lesson aims to practise at least two aspects of French in each lesson - speaking, listening, reading and writing, but often all of them. Material is adapted for those pupils with very limited literacy. At the end of each unit of work the pupil assesses her own progress and this is backed up by the teacher's assessment. The teacher also records what level each pupil reaches in the National Curriculum. The two teachers work together very well as a team.
136. Pupils' attitudes to French are generally very positive. Even the initially reluctant are won over through hard work and good humour, and join in speaking in the lessons. Pupils say they enjoy French because of the different activities. They reflect on their progress and are very critical in their self-assessments. Relationships between pupils and staff are very good, and pupils usually work happily in pairs. Pupils' confidence improves because mistakes are seen as part of learning.
137. Accommodation for French is good, and teachers are experienced. Resources are satisfactory but improvements need to be made by using ICT to overcome the difficulty pupils have in writing, and in providing first hand experience of French speakers.
138. At the last inspection, French was taught beyond age 14. It has been placed as an option with science and design and technology and there are not enough pupils opting for it, although many would like to continue with their French in some way. The last inspection was critical of the arrangements for assessment in French. This has been rectified and is now very good.

MUSIC

139. Achievement in this subject is satisfactory overall. There was no opportunity to observe lessons for pupils in their final year at the school but discussion with the co-ordinator and scrutiny of available work enabled judgements to be made.
140. All pupils participate in this subject across the school. Progress is satisfactory and some higher ability pupils leave to take up more specialist places in colleges of further education at the end of their time at Garston Manor. The overall progress of pupils, particularly in the area of musicology, is limited by the amount of time allocated to the subject, which is currently significantly less than national guidance stipulates.
141. During their time within the School, pupils steadily acquire a range of skills and knowledge. Singing shows improved attention to pitch and tempo as pupils reach the end of Year 9. Song writing is of a good standard and is close to the expectation for pupils in mainstream schools. Generally however, the amount of recorded written work is both limited and of poor quality. Between the ages of 14 and 16, pupils extend their knowledge of music to other cultures, for example in the understanding and appreciation of jazz. This in turn leads to a greater awareness of improvisation and self – expression. The playing of individual instruments as well as keyboards becomes more fluent and confident.

142. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils are usually good and the majority are keen to learn and co-operate well in the practical composition sessions observed during the inspection period. In a minority of lessons observed, behaviour of individual pupils was unsatisfactory and occasionally restricted the progress of learning for all pupils within the class.
143. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. The teacher has a good understanding of the subject and conveys his enthusiasm for it well. Relationships with pupils are good and as a result, many pupils are prepared to 'try something new' for example in a lesson observed dealing with the performance of rap music. Positive relationships also serve to create a good platform for discussion. This was observed in lessons dealing with the logistics of the forthcoming school concert. Good opportunity was given for pupils to develop their independent learning skills by means of providing choice and alternatives, for example in the instruments to be used, lyrics included and the roles of various performers within groups. Class management is satisfactory but the intervention of learning support assistants is essential to maintain the co-operation of pupils with more challenging behaviour. In the lessons observed, the learning support assistants were well briefed and this assisted with the pace of learning for most pupils.
144. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There are schemes of work in place for each year group but these do not set out in sufficient detail the teaching and learning strategies to be followed. The co-ordinator is aware of this and has plans to provide more detailed documentation in this area. Assessment arrangements are clear and comply with school policy but the use of target setting is underdeveloped. Within the time constraints referred to, the curriculum is reasonably broad and balanced and there is access to the music of other cultures, for example the folk music of Eastern Europe.
145. Resources are satisfactory. There is good access to keyboards and an appropriate amplification and recording system. There is no provision currently for music technology. The school should reconsider this because such facilities would enable pupils to translate their written work into performance more speedily and encourage them to develop their composition skills further.
146. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory and there is an appropriate emphasis on group performance that impacts positively on the social development of pupils across the school. However, the changing profile of pupil needs within the school has led to some difficulties in lesson management and there is insufficient learning support assistance in some lessons. There is insufficient curriculum time available for pupils who are aged 11 to 14.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

147. There is very good provision for physical education. Pupils are given equal access to a wide range of physical, sporting and adventurous activities, and the high standards reported at the last inspection have been improved on or maintained.
148. Achievement is very good; in most cases, pupils who enter the school in Year 7 lack fitness. About half of the pupils who joined the school recently have difficulties in co-ordination and learning difficulties that make it hard for them to remember and act on instructions without lots of adult help. By modifying the programme of activities and carefully organising teaching sets, it has been possible to offer lower attaining pupils a programme that meets their needs and improves their fitness.

149. By the end of Year 7, progress is very good and pupils achieve very well, retaining instructions throughout each activity and showing greatly increased levels of agility, speed and co-ordination in games. Higher attainers in Year 7 develop their skills in athletics. They make clear and measurable improvements week on week in, for example, javelin throwing. Pupils retain and apply skills learned in training in the context of games.
150. By Year 9, pupils in many cases attain standards in athletics and games that match those of their age peers in mainstream schools and in a few cases, surpass them. All try hard to improve on their previous performance. In their last years in school pupils have opportunities to take part in outdoor and adventurous activities. A Year 10 group who are learning to sail dinghies showed great confidence in helming and crewing their boats at a nearby sailing club. Their performance on the water was in line with that of pupils from mainstream schools who have been learning to sail for a similar time. Pupils in the sailing group have retained knowledge of the technical language of sailing and have developed and made practical use of skills such as making knots in lines.
151. In activities taken alongside other schools, such as sports festivals or competitive games, the pupils compare well with their age peers.
152. The success achieved by the pupils is the result of teaching that is of very high quality. Lessons observed were never less than good and the majority were very good or excellent. Teachers have very good knowledge of the subject requirements and are able to model the skills they wish to engender. They are adept at ensuring that all pupils are fully involved and they successfully motivate them to challenge their own previous best performance, so that as a result of each lesson, pupils run faster, throw further or drive a cricket ball more accurately.
153. Pupils' attainment in each activity is carefully recorded. Assessments of pupils' achievements are therefore based on accurate information about what each knows, understands and can do. These assessments inform teachers' planning of lessons and, where necessary, pupils with like levels of attainment and similar needs are grouped together.
154. Teachers manage their classes very well. Their lessons are well planned, make full use of time and pay sufficient attention to ensuring pupils' health and safety. The strengths in teaching reported in the last inspection remain and the overall quality is higher.
155. The subject is very well led. There is an unusual variety in the range of activities offered and outside of lessons there are many additional opportunities provided through clubs, competition against other schools and residential visits. The requirements of the National Curriculum are met.
156. There is a good range of resources for all aspects of physical education although storage arrangements, in a garage building are barely satisfactory. The outdoor facilities, including grass and hard surfaced areas are good. The main hall, which is used for assemblies and lunches, is not fully adequate for the full range of gymnastics activities. Good use is made of leisure facilities within the community.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

157. Provision for religious education is excellent and is greatly improved since the last inspection. Pupils are given ample time to learn about and learn from Christianity and major world faiths and their work within the classroom is strongly supplemented by opportunities to visit the places of worship of a number of religious groups.
158. Achievement in all years is excellent. At the last inspection some progress was unsatisfactory so there has been very significant improvement. Through well-prepared and rigorous teaching pupils are presented with essential facts in a manner that stimulates their learning. They speedily build up an impressive body of knowledge about the beliefs, customs and practices of Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Sikhism and Buddhism. More impressively, they notice the similarities and differences of practices and belief between the religions that they learn about. By Year 9, they are able to draw broad lessons for life from their understanding of the religions with which they are familiar. In a very good lesson in Year 9, debate on moral topics was of high quality. Pupils showed great maturity as they considered whether the effects of upbringing, nurture and genetic inheritance invalidated the concept of free will.
159. By Year 10, pupils have detailed knowledge of the beliefs and customs of Islam. They know that Islam means "submission" and they have visited a mosque. They identify the Five Pillars of Islam and know about their relative importance and significance. They make use of this format of five principles and duties in a written exercise in which they consider their personal beliefs and experiences. This procedure enables them to connect what they learn to their own lives in a powerful way. When asked their own views about Muslims, pupils acknowledge them as honest spiritual people. Several believe that they could not themselves maintain or adhere to such a set of duties because they would find it too difficult to give up the pleasures of their present life.
160. Teaching is of excellent quality overall. It is thoroughly prepared, very well informed and makes full use of the generous amount of time available in lessons. There is a welcome variety of methods used and tasks set. Pupils' literacy, and speaking and listening skills are strongly supported. Effective use is made of homework. Because of this, pupils are stimulated by religious education and learn very effectively. They show commitment to the subject in their oral answers, their questions, their group discussions and their written work. In lessons, pupils are active learners and evidently enjoy their work. They remember what they have learned very well and can give a good account of what they have seen and heard in their visits to temples, churches and synagogues. Relationships within the classes are positive, but it is clear that pupils understand that it is in their best interests to meet the high expectations of their teacher and waste no time. A feature of the teaching about world faiths is the personal knowledge and experience of the teacher of life and customs in Islamic and Buddhist societies. This is used very effectively to bring lessons to life.
161. The subject is co-ordinated very effectively. Teaching and learning are regularly monitored through the school's performance management strategy. The curriculum is in line with the locally agreed syllabus for religious education and is of high quality. Resources accumulated over time are useful and support learning very well.
162. Accreditation of pupils' learning in religious education is now available through the modules of work that contribute to the humanities course. There are, however, many pupils capable of gaining creditable passes in religious education in the Certificate of Educational Achievement or the GCSE examinations. A good assessment scheme has been recently introduced but this is being used only with pupils in Year 7. There are, however, plans to extend its use.