

INSPECTION REPORT

CANONS HIGH SCHOOL

Harrow, Middlesex

LEA area: Harrow

Unique reference number: 102237

Headteacher: Mr B Goddard

Reporting inspector: D M Phillips-Davies
2687

Dates of inspection: 4 - 8 February 2002

Inspection number: 195553

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	12 to 16 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Shaldon Road Harrow Middlesex
Postcode:	HA8 6AN
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr P Yager
Date of previous inspection:	12 May 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2687	Morton Phillips-Davies	Registered inspector		<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>How high are standards?</p> <p>a) The school's results and achievements</p> <p>How well are pupils taught?</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p>
8919	John Kerr	Lay inspector		<p>How high are standards?</p> <p>b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development</p> <p>How well does the school care for its pupils?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
6044	Roger Perkins	Team inspector	Mathematics	Key stage 3 strategy and numeracy
24622	David Davies	Team inspector	English Drama	Key stage 3 strategy and literacy
19015	Gordon Peacock	Team inspector	Science	
22849	Ronald Catlow	Team inspector	Geography	
27058	Kathleen Cannon	Team inspector	Special educational needs History Humanities	
2183	Peter Thompson	Team inspector	Design and technology Information and communication technology	
8786	Michael Whalley	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
17868	Eileen Metcalfe	Team inspector	Art	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
8360	Frederick Peacock	Team inspector	Music	

25748	Roger Moyle	Team inspector	Physical education	
4372	Ralph Fordham	Team inspector	Religious education	
23588	Charanjit Ajitsingh	Team inspector	English as an additional language Equal opportunities	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Canons High School is a mixed community comprehensive school in Harrow with a roll of 702 pupils aged 12-16, 406 boys and 296 girls. There is a significant level of pupil mobility. In addition to those who enter at 12 or leave at 16, 100 pupils joined the school and 12 left in the last year. About 14 per cent of the pupils are refugees, including asylum seekers; the predominant country of origin is Afghanistan. The school population reflects the rich diversity of the local communities and about 85 per cent of the pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds. There are more than 40 different home languages, the main ones being Punjabi, Somali, Gujarati and Farsi. Sixty-four per cent of the pupils have English as an additional language (EAL). This is very high, and a significant proportion requires additional support to learn the language. Almost thirty per cent of the pupils are on the special educational needs register, including 26 pupils with statements. Both figures are above the national average. Many pupils come from relatively disadvantaged homes. Twenty-six per cent of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is above the national average. The attainment on entry is below average and pupils' English language skills are well below average.

During the week of the inspection the school was informed that it had achieved Technology College status.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Canons High School is a good school. Pupils make good progress in their time at the school and their performance in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations is well above that of pupils in similar schools. The good quality of teaching and the very good pupil attitudes are key factors in this. The school is well led and managed with a good balance of well-established and relatively new staff. The unit costs are well above average and the school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils make good progress and perform very well in the GCSE examinations compared to pupils in similar schools.
- The quality of teaching has improved significantly, particularly in Years 8 and 9. It is now good.
- Provision for cultural development is excellent: it is very good for social and moral development.
- Members of staff are strongly committed to the ethos of the school and relationships are excellent.
- There is clear respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others.
- Pupils perform well at the school regardless of their ability, ethnicity, gender, or faith.
- The process for identifying priorities is very good; it includes a thorough audit of needs and seeks the views of the staff, parents and pupils.

What could be improved

- Pupils' skills in literacy, including those pupils with EAL who have basic skills in English but are still not able to take advantage of the full curriculum.
- Attainment in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 9.
- Aspects of curricular provision in Years 10 and 11, including compliance with statutory requirements for information and communication technology and for religious education.
- The systematic evaluation of the quality of teaching to bring about further improvement.
- A reduction in the above average level of fixed term exclusions.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in May 1997. Since the last inspection the school has made good progress overall, with a quickening in pace over the last eighteen months. The school has done very well to sustain the high level of achievement in the GCSE examinations. There has been a marked improvement in the quality of teaching, particularly in Years 8 and 9 where 25 per cent of lessons were judged unsatisfactory in 1997. The corresponding figure in this inspection is 3 per cent. This

improvement in teaching is, however, not yet reflected in the National Curriculum test results at the end of Year 9, which remain well below average. The work seen indicates that there will be an improvement in the results for the present Year 9. More appropriate overall targets have now been set for the pupils in Year 9 but not yet at an individual level. The very good climate for learning reported on at the last inspection has been maintained. There is greater curriculum continuity with the middle schools. The line management system has been strengthened and the school is likely to be able to remove the budget deficit by the end of this financial year. The provision for special educational needs has significantly improved. Academic inclusion is very successful and, in the best lessons, it is often difficult to identify pupils with additional needs. The planning process adopted for developing the present school improvement plan was very good. That plan produced in October 2001 contains some of the key areas for development identified in 1997 on which limited progress had been made at that time. Aspects of weakness reported on in the last inspection in religious education and in the provision for information and communication technology remain. The school has the capacity to bring about further improvement.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			Similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
GCSE examinations	C	B	C	A	well above average A Above average B average C Below average D well below average E

Pupils have below average attainment on entry. They make good progress during their time in the school and their achievement is good by the time they leave.

Pupils' performance in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science is well below the national average in terms of points scores. In comparison with results in similar schools pupils' performance is below average in English and mathematics and well below in science. The results in mathematics are best, where, compared to those in similar schools, they are above average in terms of the percentage of pupils achieving Level 6 and average in terms of those achieving Level 5 or above. Compared to the national picture the performance of boys and girls is similar in science, boys do relatively better in English and girls in mathematics. Results have not improved in recent years. The targets set for the end of Year 9 in these subjects have been too low and have shown a lack of ambition. These targets have been increased for the present Year 9.

Results in the GCSE examinations are in line with national averages. They are well above those in similar schools across the full range of grades. The trend in attainment is in line with that seen nationally and the school has sustained a very high standard over a period of time. There are no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls and pupils' achievement is good across the ability range. The results at the end of Year 11 represent very good progress from the end of Year 9. The school sets ambitious targets for GCSE both overall and in individual subjects. In the year 2000, when the school was in the top five per cent of similar schools nationally and received a School Achievement Award, these ambitious targets were exceeded. They were not achieved this year although the school was still in the top quarter compared to similar schools nationally. Target setting is effective at this level.

Overall standards of attainment seen in lessons in Years 8 and 9 are below the national average and those in Years 10 and 11 are average. Standards in lessons indicate clearly the progress made by pupils in the school. In Year 8 the standards seen in about one-fifth of lessons were in line with the national average. This proportion increases steadily as pupils move up the school with a sharp rise in Year 11 where standards seen in three-quarters of lessons were at the national average. Pupils'

achievement in Years 8 and 9 is satisfactory and it is good in Years 10 and 11. Attainment in numeracy is in line with the national expectation by the time pupils leave school but it is still below in literacy.

Students with special educational needs make good and sometimes very good progress as they rise through the school. Since the last inspection, improvement in the achievement of pupils at the initial stages of learning English as an additional language has been good and achievement is now satisfactory in Years 8 and 9. The achievement of pupils with EAL in Years 10 and 11 is good, as is their attainment at the end of Year 11. They do well in GCSE examinations.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good: pupils are normally enthusiastic and eager to learn and participate well in what the school offers.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good, particularly in the classrooms. It can be boisterous around the school. The rate of fixed term exclusions is above average.
Personal development and relationships	Very good: pupils develop positive outlooks, high self-esteem and respect for others and are prepared to take responsibility. Relationships are excellent.
Attendance	Satisfactory.

The very good attitudes shown by pupils and the excellent relationships are significant factors in bringing about the good quality of learning and the good progress made by pupils.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is good overall and in all subjects except design and technology and science where it is satisfactory throughout the school. It is also satisfactory in geography in Years 8 and 9 but good in Years 10 and 11. The quality of teaching is very good in music in Years 10 and 11. The highest proportions of very good teaching were seen in art, music, physical education and Spanish. This good teaching enables pupils to learn well and they make good progress during their time in the school. In the great majority of lessons pupils' learning is directly related to the quality of teaching. Pupils show interest in their work and normally sustain good levels of concentration. They acquire a range of new skills and are effectively developing their knowledge and understanding across a range of subjects. Their limited competence in English slows progress for some pupils in the early years at the school but progress in later years is much better as their English improves. They effectively apply physical and creative effort and this is seen particularly in the good work in music, art and physical education. The school's practice of educational inclusion is very good. Over the four years they attend the school, the progress made by pupils with special needs and those with English as an additional language is good, with some significant successes among pupils with special needs. Teachers' high expectations of pupils' behaviour, their good classroom management skills and the effective use of their good knowledge and understanding of their subjects are major factors in the pupils' success. The very good pupil attitudes and the excellent relationships are also major factors in this.

There is a satisfactory emphasis on the teaching of literacy in a number of subjects but it is not sufficiently and systematically developed across the school. This is an area of weakness and there is presently no whole school policy or strategy for its development. Whilst there is no whole school policy to guide and co-ordinate the teaching of numeracy across the curriculum, the development of pupils' numerical skills is established effectively in mathematics and satisfactory provision is made overall in other subjects.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is satisfactory in Years 8 and 9: it provides a broad and balanced range of learning opportunities. It does not meet statutory requirements in Years 10 and 11 and is unsatisfactory.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is good with many very good aspects.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Provision is good in Years 10 and 11 and satisfactory in Years 8 and 9.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision is very good. It is excellent for cultural development, very good for moral and social development and good for spiritual development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for its pupils well and works hard to create a secure and pleasant environment. Procedures for assessing pupils' progress are satisfactory.

The school works effectively with parents and is seeking to consolidate and extend its links with them. Equality of opportunity and access to the curriculum for all pupils are very good. Statutory requirements for an act of collective worship and for the provision of religious education and information and communication technology in Years 10 and 11 are not met. The extra-curricular provision is good and usefully supplements the formal curriculum. The lack of a curricular strategy for the development of literacy is a weakness. The tutorial system is a strength and the very good relationships allow pupils to discuss difficult issues with staff.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is well led. The new headteacher, having consulted widely, has established a clear sense of direction that builds on existing strengths. Overall, the management is good.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body operates effectively as a group and is making a good contribution to shaping the direction of the school. The group is too dependent on a few individuals. Three statutory curricular requirements are not met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory overall, with some good aspects but also areas for development such as the systematic monitoring of teaching.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses its resources well.

The overall provision of staff, accommodation and resources is satisfactory, with staff provision the strongest of the three. Governors understand the principles of best value and apply them appropriately.

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 like the school.• The school's high expectations of their children.• The good progress made by their children.• The good teaching.• Members of staff at the school are approachable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The range of activities provided outside lessons.• The amount of homework.• They feel the school does not work closely with them.

Parents are supportive of the school and expressed a high and increasing level of satisfaction.

The inspectors' judgements support the parents' positive views. A good range of activities is provided outside of lessons and these are generally well attended. The programme is more comprehensive for boys than for girls. The inspectors considered that homework is generally correctly and regularly set. Its use is good in most subjects, satisfactory in some but in need of improvement in information and communication technology and geography. The school is further developing its links with parents through the establishment of the 'Friends of Canons High School' and workshops to develop parents' skills in numeracy, literacy and ICT.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils' attainment on entry in Year 8 is below that seen nationally and their English language skills are well below. Almost thirty per cent of pupils are identified as having special educational needs.
2. Results in the National Curriculum tests in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 9 are well below the national average. They are not high enough and have not improved in recent years. The targets set for the end of Year 9 in these subjects have been too low and have shown a lack of ambition. These targets have been increased for the present Year 9.
3. Results in the General Certificate of Education (GCSE) examinations are in line with the national average. They are well above those in similar schools across the full range of grades. The trend in attainment is in line with that seen nationally and the school has done very well to sustain the high level of achievement in the GCSE examinations over a period of time. There are no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls. These results represent very good achievement relative to attainment at the end of Year 9. The school sets ambitious targets for GCSE both overall and in individual subjects. In the year 2000, when the school was in the top five per cent of similar schools nationally and received a School Achievement Award, these ambitious targets were exceeded. Target setting is effective at this level. Pupils make good progress overall in their time at school.
4. Overall standards seen in lessons in Years 8 and 9 are below the national average and those in Years 10 and 11 are average. Standards in lessons indicate clearly the progress made by pupils in the school. In Year 8 the standards seen in about one fifth of lessons were in line with the national average. This proportion increases steadily as pupils move up the school with a sharp rise in Year 11 where standards seen in three-quarters of lessons are now at the national average. Pupils' achievement in Years 8 and 9 is satisfactory and it is good in Years 10 and 11.
5. Students with special educational needs make good and sometimes very good progress as they rise through the school. By the end of Year 9, most students have developed basic literacy and numeracy skills. Their reading and comprehension levels improve, sometimes quite dramatically, increasing from a non-functional reading age of 6 years to match their chronological age. In Years 10 and 11, pupils work towards GCSE examinations. However, a small number are formally disapplied from the National Curriculum to follow an accredited life-skills programme. Since the last inspection, improvement in the achievement of pupils at the initial stages of English as an additional language (EAL) has been good, and it is now satisfactory in Years 8 and 9. The achievement of pupils with EAL in Years 10 and 11 is good, as is their attainment at the end of Year 11. They do well in GCSE examinations.
6. In the National Curriculum tests in English at the end of Year 9 in 2001, the percentage of pupils obtaining Level 5 or higher was well below the national average and the percentage of pupils obtaining Level 6 or higher was below the national average. Inspection evidence confirms that the attainment of pupils at the end of Year 9 is below national averages. The 2001 GCSE results in English were below the national average but above average in comparison with similar schools. Girls performed better than boys but to a lesser extent than nationally. The inspection evidence confirms that the attainment of pupils by the end of Year 11 is below national averages, but nearer to the national average than at the end of Year 9. These results should be seen in the context that almost two-thirds of the pupils in the school are from homes where English is not the first language and that attainment on entry is judged to be generally below national norms and well below in terms of pupils' English language skills. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory by the end of Year 9 and it is good by the end of Year 11.

7. Pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is below national expectations in all years. In most lessons pupils respond to questions when asked by teachers. However, their answers are sometimes too short. Pupils contribute to group discussions, for example when discussing the importance of themes and characters in a story, and they can read aloud expressively from texts. Standards of reading are below national expectations in all years. Pupils read a range of novels, plays and poetry, including Greek legends and poems from other cultures. Year 8 pupils benefit from weekly library periods. Pupils can select information from texts, for example in a 'cloze' exercise on 'Twelfth Night' in a Year 9 lesson where they match quotations from a synopsis of the plot. Pupils' attainment in writing is below national expectations in all years. Year 8 pupils can write poems and rap songs about Greek legends and Year 10 pupils can make personal and critical comments on love poetry. By the end of Year 9 pupils can use similes imaginatively. By the end of Year 11 they recognise terms such as soliloquies and show knowledge of the plot of 'Romeo and Juliet'.
8. When they come to the school pupils' standards in mathematics are below the national average. They make good progress as they move through the school and, by the end of Year 11, are working at a level around the national average. Pupils' attainment in the 2001 mathematics tests at the end of Year 9 was well below the national average. Results in these tests have not improved in recent years. Pupils' performance in the 2001 tests was the same as that for similar schools at Level 5 or higher but better for the more able pupils attaining Level 6 or higher. Half of the pupils had improved by two levels or more by Year 9 compared to their mathematics test result in Year 6, a positive achievement. Pupils achieve better results than in science and similar to those in English. The percentage of pupils achieving GCSE grades A*-C in 2001 is very close to the national average and was above the average in 2000. Pupils achieve well in GCSE mathematics compared to their Year 9 test performance. Results in mathematics at GCSE are better than in most other subjects including English and science. Boys outperformed girls in 2001 but attained less well in 2000. Inspection evidence shows that overall attainment by the end of Year 9 is just below the national average and pupils' achievement is good. By the end of Year 11 pupils' attainment is in line with the national average and achievement is good.
9. Standards in numeracy reflect those in mathematics. The Key Stage 3 strategy for mathematics is having a positive effect on teaching and learning. Teachers in mathematics routinely use starter activities based on the numeracy strategy to improve pupils' mental agility and confidence. The use of plenary sessions to summarise and review what has taken place in lessons is under-developed. Pupils use numeracy satisfactorily in other subjects overall; more effectively in science and art than in geography and history.
10. The attainment levels by the end of Year 9 in science have been well below the national average and were also last year well below those in similar schools. Evidence indicates that the targets set for this year will be met: an improvement on recent years. Pupils are effectively supported in developing scientific enquiry and many pupils achieve Level 5 in their investigative work. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. GCSE results are below the national average but in the upper quartile for similar schools in terms of the percentage of pupils achieving grades A*-C. This shows good progress is made in Years 10 and 11 and pupils' achievement is good. Individual targets for Year 11 pupils seem realistic and present evidence indicates that they should be achieved putting the department's results near the national average.
11. In the other subjects of the curriculum there is strength in the performing and creative arts and in physical education. In each of drama, music, art and physical education attainment is in line with that seen nationally and achievement is good. As with other subjects, the achievement of older pupils is better than that of younger pupils. These differences are most sharply seen in drama with its greater emphasis on language. In physical education and in music standards by the end of Year 11 are above the national average.
12. The humanities subjects are also relatively strong. The overall standards in history and religious education are in line with those seen nationally although those in geography are below. Standards at the end of Year 11 are higher relative to national norms than at the end of Year 9. Standards at the end of Year 11 in religious education for pupils following the GCSE course are above the

national average, but no overall judgement of attainment can be made as there is no general provision of religious education for all pupils. All pupils also follow an integrated humanities course in Years 10 and 11 and the standards achieved on this course are also above average. Pupils' achievement is good in history, geography, religious education and on the integrated humanities course.

13. The substantial improvement in the quality of provision in modern foreign languages, particularly the teaching, since the last inspection is not yet fully reflected in pupils' attainment. Attainment at the end of Year 9 and Year 11 is below the national average but pupils' achievement is satisfactory. GCSE results in the main language of French over the past three years have shown a clear upward trend towards national averages despite a fall in A*-C passes in 2001. Current performance in Years 10 and 11 is strongest in Spanish where it is on a par with national standards and weakest in German where it is well below.
14. Pupils' attainment in design and technology at the end of Year 9 and Year 11 is below the national average but pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils perform best in the food technology GCSE examinations where the proportion of pupils obtaining the higher grades is in line with the national average.
15. The situation in information and communication technology (ICT) is complicated because of changes in the course structures and the fact that there is no provision for ICT on the timetable in Years 10 and 11. The school is unable to ensure that it fully meets requirements in Years 10 and 11. Standards by the end of Year 9 are in line with the national average and achievement is good. Boys and girls achieve equally well. Standards at the end of Year 11 are variable but the majority of pupils do not make satisfactory progress. Whilst there is no provision for ICT on the timetable, pupils do undertake worthwhile applications of computing in some other subjects. The standard of attainment in these lessons varies but is sometimes very good. A group of pupils is entered for examinations in ICT each year by the ICT co-ordinator without taking a formal course and the most recent group achieved very well. Overall, however, pupil achievement is unsatisfactory at this stage.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

16. Pupils' attitudes and personal development are very good. Canons is a multi-cultural school, which successfully encourages positive values. Pupils are enthusiastic and eager to learn. Behaviour is good and there is an absence of any form of oppression. Relationships between staff and pupils and among pupils themselves are excellent. Pupils work very well together, helping each other to develop their learning and an understanding of the rich diversity of cultures and beliefs within the school.
17. From the time they join the school, pupils have a positive and responsive attitude to work. As they progress through the school, they become increasingly mature and are eager to contribute to the lessons. Pupils in all year groups apply themselves well to demanding tasks. This is particularly evident with pupils who have recently arrived in this country, such as when they set out to learn another foreign language through English. Many of these pupils are very highly motivated. In the friendly atmosphere, pupils are confident to seek assistance to further their understanding. Some pupils lack self-motivation in a few classes in Years 10 and 11, mainly a few disaffected boys who are easily distracted.
18. Behaviour in class is good. The effective teaching and the careful planning of lessons contribute to this. As a result, very little learning time is lost through misbehaviour. Pupils respond to encouragement and praise. Behaviour around the school buildings can be boisterous. However, pupils have responded to the stricter regimes, which are being established to encourage better standards of self-discipline. This is particularly noticeable in Years 8 and 9 where the number of reported incidents of unacceptable behaviour has fallen.
19. The number of exclusions remains high. The rate of permanent and fixed term exclusions is above average. Most exclusions are for fixed terms and include a disproportional number of white boys.

Of the five permanent exclusions, the majority applied to pupils who had been excluded from their previous schools. An analysis of incidents of unacceptable behaviour indicated virtually no bullying, sexism or racism. Parents and pupils confirm this. Incidents of physical and verbal abuse are the most common causes for exclusion together with recurring incidents of unacceptable behaviour.

20. The exceedingly good relationships seen among pupils and between pupils and teachers are a strength of the school. Friendships are formed quickly even with those joining the school in mid term. The more able pupils are often seen helping others in setting up tasks and working together to further their learning. They will do this quite voluntarily. This is particularly so in music and art where pupils collaborate well and benefit from good analysis of the work of their peers but is also seen in other subjects such as science. Pupils are well mannered and co-operate with staff and adults in the school.
21. Pupils of all ages are pleased to join in discussions, ask relevant questions and explore ideas together. For instance pupils in Years 10 and 11 will express their views about the use of the Qur'an, while in Years 8 and 9 pupils showed respect for the beliefs of others in a discussion about miracles. Because of the very good social relationships, pupils develop a good understanding of each other's cultures. Pupils are interested independent learners. When their work is challenging and requires careful planning, they apply themselves well, seeking information from a variety of sources. It is only on rare occasions, mainly among groups of disaffected boys, that self-motivation levels are not high and they become satisfied with inadequate work.
22. Pupils welcome the opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning as well as for involvement in running the school. As representatives of the year and school councils, their opinions and suggestions are valued. An example of this was their involvement in the revision of the behaviour policy. There is a very well developed Peer Listening group in the school. Volunteers in Year 10 listen to the concerns of pupils in the lower years, helping them, wherever they can, to resolve their own concerns. The listeners help to select their successors each year and assist in their training as listeners. In class, the collective ethos of help for each other leads to many good learning opportunities.
23. Attendance is satisfactory. It is marginally below the national average. To a degree, this reflects the diversity of religious festivals observed by pupils and the holidays taken for cultural and family reasons in term-time. Unauthorised absence likewise is marginally above the national average. Most parents account for their children's absence; it is mainly the small minority of regular non-attenders whose reasons for absences are not recorded. Punctuality is satisfactory.
24. The previous report noted that pupils grew in self-esteem as they progressed through the school, leaving it with positive outlooks, high self-esteem and respect for others. This is still the case.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

25. The quality of teaching is good in most subjects, in the school overall and in each year. It has improved significantly since the last inspection, particularly in Years 8 and 9 where it was then judged unsatisfactory in a quarter of the lessons seen. During this inspection unsatisfactory teaching was observed in four of the 136 lessons seen, one from each year group. The proportion of lessons where the quality of teaching is judged to be good or very good has also risen from under half at the last inspection to almost two-thirds. Whilst this improvement in teaching is seen in the improved quality of pupils' learning it is not yet having an effect on attainment in some subjects at the end of Year 9 and Year 11. Examples of where this is the case are pupils' attainment in the National Curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 9 and in modern foreign languages at the end of Year 11.
26. The good teaching enables pupils to learn well and they make good progress during their time in the school. Pupils show interest in their work and normally sustain good levels of concentration. They acquire a range of new skills and are effectively developing their knowledge and

understanding across a range of subjects. For some pupils their limited competence in English slows their progress in the early years at the school but progress in later years is much better. They effectively apply physical and creative effort and this is seen particularly in the good work in music, art and physical education. The pace of work is good in about half the subjects and satisfactory in the others; it only drops below this level in design and technology in Years 10 and 11. In the great majority of lessons pupils' learning is directly related to the quality of teaching. There were a few occasions where the teaching did not produce a corresponding level of learning. This was due mainly to situations where the material being covered was too demanding or insufficiently challenging for some pupils among the wide range of pupil ability and needs in the mixed ability classes. These often contain many pupils with special needs and with English as an additional language at various stages of language acquisition. This was principally seen in English and modern foreign language lessons, particularly where there was no additional classroom support.

27. Teaching is good in all subjects except design and technology and science where it is satisfactory and in geography where it is satisfactory in Years 8 and 9 but good in Years 10 and 11. The quality of teaching is very good in music in Years 10 and 11. The highest proportions of very good teaching were seen in art, music, physical education and Spanish. The school reports that it has encountered difficulties in appointing permanent staff in both design and technology and in science, and temporary staff were teaching in both these subjects during the inspection.
28. The good teaching in English enables pupils to make good progress during their time in the school. The development of literacy in English is seen in the ability of pupils to define key literary terms such as similes and soliloquies and words related to English are displayed on the walls. Some elements of the literacy strategy, such as the three-part lesson structure of starter activity, main activity and plenary session, have already been introduced effectively in Year 8. The quality of teaching in these lessons is good.
29. The lack of a specific policy on language across the curriculum restricts the development of literacy across the school, which is a significant weakness considering the limitations in literacy of many pupils when they enter the school. However, elements of good practice in developing literacy are seen in a number of subjects. Key words relating to subjects are placed on walls in the teaching rooms, examples of this are seen in drama and science. In design and technology key words are emphasised and most of the English in the written work is corrected. In mathematics key words related to the subject are placed in exercise books and pupils are encouraged to use correct terminology. Teachers routinely emphasise the precise meaning of key mathematical terms such as discrete and continuous, or median and mode, so that pupils begin to use and interpret these correctly. In the best lessons in mathematics teachers fully involve pupils in explaining tasks and methods in straightforward language so that all pupils in the class develop a much better understanding of the process. There are opportunities for pupils to take part in extra- curricular activities such as trips to the theatre.
30. The quality of teaching and of learning is good in mathematics throughout the school. Teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of mathematics and are enthusiastic about it. They convey this enthusiasm to the pupils, so that they make steady progress and enjoy the subject. Teaching of the basic skill of numeracy is well established and in the best lessons pupils are effectively involved through discussion in developing the work. The strategy of using pupils as tutors in this work was seen to significantly improve the understanding of all in one lesson. The individualised learning scheme in mathematics allows pupils to progress from the level they have reached. The implementation of the Key Stage 3 strategy for numeracy is, however, leading to potentially significant development of the mathematics scheme of work. At present the effect on teaching and learning as a result of changes already made is positive. Teachers routinely use starter activities based on the numeracy strategy to improve pupils' mental agility and confidence. For example, one teacher began lessons with x , y and z representing various positive and negative integers and pupils were asked to solve a variety of progressively more difficult algebraic expressions while another used carefully selected 'follow me' cards distributed to pupils based on their abilities. Both succeeded in interesting and challenging pupils across the ability range so that they achieved higher standards. Thirty pupils attended a summer 'catch up' programme and a

sample of them found it helped improve their knowledge and understanding. An excellent innovation is sessions for parents of 'catch up' pupils. These are provided to help them improve their own knowledge and understanding and become more aware of their children's needs.

31. Whilst there is no whole school policy to co-ordinate the development of numeracy across the curriculum, its development is well established in mathematics. Its development in other subjects, although variable, is satisfactory overall. In science pupils use algebra confidently, measure accurately, construct and interpret graphs successfully and use calculators effectively. In design and technology pupils measure quantities accurately and interpret graphs such as bar and pie charts. Pupils cope satisfactorily with spreadsheets in information and communication technology. In art pupils use scale and proportion skilfully in direct observational drawings.
32. The school's practice of educational inclusion is very good, and all pupils have total equality of access to all aspects of the curriculum. Good quality support teaching strongly promotes pupils' development by raising their perceptions of their own abilities and achievements. A number of members of staff have specific training in dealing with various learning difficulties such as autism and dyslexia. Where the subject teacher makes good provision for pupils with special needs, it is often difficult to identify them because they are totally included within the lesson. For example, the students on the autistic spectrum and those with Downs Syndrome participate very well alongside their peers in lesson and break-time activities. However, across the subject areas, although all members of staff are aware of individual needs, the provision for special educational needs and extension work for higher achieving pupils is not consistently achieved. For example, all pupils in English and history use the same texts regardless of their differing abilities, and access to computers is limited. More could be expected of the most able pupils in geography. However, extension exercises in physical education extend the high attainers.
33. A small number of pupils with poor reading and language skills are withdrawn for individual support on a regular basis. The quality of withdrawal teaching is good, with realistic levels of challenge, which question pupils' comprehension through discussion and word meanings. Difficult words are highlighted and used as a basis for spelling tests, and this promotes vocabulary development. Teachers keep detailed records of pupils' progress to inform future lessons. In Years 10 and 11, where pupils attend study support sessions, they are encouraged to accept some responsibility for their own learning. For example, they bring their work with them following their discussions with subject teachers. The teaching and in-class support is good, with pupils being encouraged to use computers for word processing their work or conducting Internet research. The members of staff have a very good knowledge of their pupils and relationships are very good.
34. Most pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) demonstrate that they have acquired sufficient language skills to function effectively and they are well integrated into the mainstream. They generally respond very well to the good teaching as they gain confidence and feel secure. They are eager to learn. Subject teachers usually have strategies for meeting their general needs. However, this could be improved through more joint work with the EAL specialist. Teachers also receive additional support for those who are at early stages of learning English. In-class specialist support is good where available, but it is not consistent across the school and departments. EAL and other staff, including support assistants for special needs, who are mostly bilingual, enable pupils to access the curriculum by a variety of teaching strategies including the use of first language and resources such as the use of bilingual dictionaries and occasionally the use of peer or 'buddy' help. All work is firmly placed within the National Curriculum. However, where there is a wide range of ability and no additional support, regardless of the best efforts of the teacher, initial learners with EAL do not achieve well. For example, pupils in Years 10 and 11 who have not yet acquired basic skills in English find it particularly difficult to learn a modern European language. Also some pupils at more advanced levels often struggle due to limitations in their understanding and skills in using subject specific language. They have fewer opportunities for supported speaking and listening and of effective access to models of spoken and written language than pupils at an early stage of language acquisition. This slows their progress, particularly in Years 8 and 9. Only 54 pupils receive support on a withdrawal basis across the school, most of which is aimed at catching up with homework, class or coursework, particularly for Years 10 and 11. There is, however, also some effective induction for new and refugee pupils.

35. Teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour are high and pupils are normally managed well. They reciprocate and show very good attitudes in lessons. This is a major factor in the good quality of learning and progress made by pupils. The excellent relationships between staff and pupils, and among the pupils themselves, are also a significant influence in supporting the learning. Pupils co-operate well when asked to work in pairs or groups. Boys and girls work together well, as do those from different ethnic groups. They feel confident to support each other and on occasions assist in developing their own and others' understanding. An example of this was seen in a very good mathematics lesson where the teacher and pupils working together developed methods for calculating different types of average, and another is the 'buddy system' where EAL pupils assist each other. In music gifted and talented pupils help others with their playing. On occasions, however, when working in groups, less effective pupils show an over-reliance on higher ability pupils to do the work, as was seen in a drama lesson.
36. Teachers use their good knowledge and understanding of their subject to plan lessons thoroughly and to explain things clearly to pupils. In art, teachers use their knowledge to good effect in providing pupils with an understanding of the themes they study and to learn about artistic techniques. Teachers also seek to make the lessons interesting. The approaches adopted by teachers effectively support pupils' learning and good examples of the use of questioning techniques were seen. An imaginative new approach in the use of 'thinking skills' in the creative arts is at an early stage of development. A specific lesson every half term is devoted to developing cognitive skills and extending pupils. The lessons where it was being applied, however, did not reach the high standards normally seen and further work is needed on this approach.
37. The use teachers make of their ongoing assessment of pupils varies between subjects. It is best in music and art where it is very good. It is also good in mathematics, religious education, physical education, modern foreign languages and drama but it is unsatisfactory in English, as it does not enable pupils to gain a clear understanding of how they can improve their work.
38. Homework is set regularly and it is used well in English, history, religious education, art, physical education and drama; it is not effectively used in geography and information and communication technology.
39. The quality of teaching both in specialist ICT lessons and in lessons where it is applied in other subjects is good. However, the provision for and use of information and communication technology is of variable quality. The quality of learning in Years 8 and 9 is good but it is unsatisfactory overall in Years 10 and 11 because the school is not ensuring that all pupils have a sufficient experience of ICT. Information and communication technology is effectively used in a number of subjects such as science, art and music but opportunities are missed in design and technology, mathematics, the humanities and modern foreign languages partly due to the lack of accessible computers.

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

40. The school makes satisfactory provision in Years 8 and 9 through a curriculum that is broad and balanced and offers a range of learning opportunities, which are suited to pupils' needs. All pupils study the subjects of the National Curriculum, religious education, drama, and personal, social and health education. History and geography are taught as humanities. The time allocation for information and communication technology (ICT) within the formal curriculum is insufficient to meet the course requirements in Year 8. The school is phasing out its earlier ICT course and is replacing it with a course leading to a General National Vocational Qualification at Intermediate Level. This course is designed for pupils in Years 10 and 11 and early signs indicate that it represents a very high level of challenge for pupils in Year 8. There is a strong programme of extra-curricular provision in ICT with lessons held every evening after school. Pupils' attendance is good, they clearly value the courses and it significantly enhances provision in this subject.

Curricular provision in modern foreign languages in Year 8 is unnecessarily complex and arbitrary with some pupils doing half a term of French and half a term of Spanish, some French only and others Spanish only. This creates additional complexity and challenge in an area where a number of pupils experience difficulties. The quality and range of learning opportunities for geography within humanities is in need of further development.

41. Curricular provision is unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11. The statutory requirement to provide religious education for all pupils is not met. This situation has not been rectified since the previous inspection. Religious education is offered as an optional subject and the pupils who take it do well in GCSE examinations. However, for the remaining pupils the provision for religious education within humanities is limited. It consists of a unit of work on moral issues that covers some aspects of the Harrow LEA Agreed Syllabus but it is not sufficient to meet the statutory requirements. The statutory requirements for the provision of information and communications technology (ICT) are also not met. At the time of the previous inspection the statutory requirements for ICT were met in Years 10 and 11 but not in Years 8 and 9. The situation is now reversed. In Years 10 and 11 there is no specialist course in ICT. The work done in other subjects, while fulfilling subject specific ICT requirements, does not meet the overall requirements. The cross-curricular teaching of ICT is not co-ordinated effectively.
42. Apart from the absence of elements of religious education and ICT, all pupils in Years 10 and 11 follow a good range of subjects. They also select two additional GCSE subjects from a number of options, which include business studies. All pupils follow the humanities course and many also opt to take history or geography, which leads to some duplication of educational experience for those pupils. There is no provision for vocational courses apart from that for a very small number of pupils who are formally disapplied from the National Curriculum to follow an accredited life-skills programme. The school recognises that for a small group of pupils for whom a full GCSE course is not appropriate the current provision is not satisfactory. At whole school level the school should use the assessment information it collects about different groups of pupils to consider how far its current curriculum in Years 10 and 11 meets the needs of its pupils.
43. With the exception of the optional subjects and the very small number of statemented pupils following a modified curriculum in Years 10 and 11, pupils are taught in mixed ability classes. There is little flexibility in the timetable structure for subjects to group pupils in other ways. Where relevant, lower achieving pupils also receive extra support through withdrawal reading and spelling sessions, while older pupils attend study support sessions to develop their examination coursework. The provision for pupils with English as an additional language is satisfactory in Years 8 and 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. In some classes in modern foreign languages the highly diverse profile of pupils, both in terms of pupils with EAL and of pupils' attainment, means that the curriculum does not effectively respond to needs. In recent years a number of subjects have introduced levelled papers in GCSE. Some of these contain different content, which creates additional challenges in teaching GCSE groups in mixed ability classes.
44. All pupils follow a course in personal, social and health education (PSHE) which is allocated one lesson each week. This is planned by the heads of year and co-ordinated by a senior member of staff. It makes satisfactory provision and includes sex and drugs education. Some elements such as safety are provided for well. The course is taught for the most part by form tutors who stay with their groups throughout their years in school. This leads to the development of good relationships and continuity. Some aspects of personal, social and health education are also taught in the humanities programme, which is provided as a discrete subject in all years. Education for citizenship is provided through humanities.
45. The school is committed to promoting equal opportunities for all and has a good Equality of Opportunity policy that covers all the relevant aspects. These are all observed in practice. The provision for pupils with special educational needs, including the talented, is good. Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is satisfactory in Years 8 and 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. The lack of a strategy for the development of pupils' literacy across the curriculum is, however, a weakness. The school meets the requirements of the Race Relations Act and is justifiably proud of its multi-cultural community of pupils and staff. Displays around the school

suggest an awareness of an ethnically diverse society and all groups are represented in non-stereotypical ways. The curriculum celebrates cultural diversity and prepares pupils very well for life in a multi-cultural society.

46. The provision for extra-curricular activities is good, particularly in physical education and the performing arts. There are commendable successes in many sports. The school produces large-scale music and drama productions. Most subjects have clubs at lunchtime and after school to support pupils' learning, especially for GCSE studies and the GNVQ, part 1, Intermediate Level course in ICT. These are well attended and valued by the pupils. There are visits to art galleries, museums, field studies centres and other institutions that support pupils' learning. The school has won a London Youth Award for dance and there is a specialist boys' dance group that is part of the Local Education Authority initiative to raise boys' achievement. Extra-curricular music is also strong and includes provision for the Blues, Reggae, Indian Raga and African drumming. There is an annual residential visit to the Isle of Wight for all Year 8 pupils and other trips abroad, including those for modern foreign languages.
47. There has been improvement in the provision for curricular continuity between the main middle feeder schools and Canons, a weakness identified in the previous inspection, and it is now satisfactory. Teachers visit the middle schools and teach lessons that will bridge the gap between the teaching provision in the different schools. The middle schools use the specialist accommodation in food technology and science at Canons. All members of staff visited the middle schools on a recent training day to observe lessons on literacy and numeracy. Pupils and teachers are involved in the arrangements prior to pupils' transfer and teachers co-operate in identifying pupils for the summer schools and teaching on them. There is a partnership magazine produced and the schools share a mini-bus. There is an agreed Year 7 syllabus in science, geography and history, but the experiences of pupils on entry are still different as observed in a science lesson. Links with the feeder schools are not sufficiently thorough and comprehensive in English, science and modern foreign languages. Links with the colleges are satisfactory. The colleges show good initiative in forging links especially with regard to option choices. This provides continuity in subject areas. The colleges visit the school and the pupils have visits to the colleges arranged within the careers programme. There is a sound guidance and careers programme and links with the Careers Service are good. A high percentage of pupils go on to further education.
48. The contribution of the community to pupils' learning is satisfactory. There is an Industry Day in Year 10 when visitors come into school to speak to the pupils. There are good links with the businesses and industries that provide work experience for all pupils in Year 11. A television personality and other members of the wider community present awards at the pupils' graduation. Members of 'Relate' work in the school.
49. Overall, the provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) of pupils is very good. Cultural development is excellent, moral and social development is very good and spiritual development is good.
50. The focus of the school on good and respectful relationships and the creation of a safe environment that respects cultural differences, race and gender, influences every aspect of the life of the school. This has a powerful impact on the growth and development of all members of the school community. There are many references to these aspects of pupils' personal development in the school's documentation, especially with regard to behaviour, equal opportunities and bullying. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme is an important part of the school's provision for SMSC. The religious education syllabus provides well in these areas, and there are valuable examples of opportunities for reflection and discussion of spiritual and moral issues. There is, currently, no co-ordination of SMSC provision across the school. However, a new teaching and learning policy invites departments to plan for the delivery of SMSC in their curriculum. This should provide a valuable starting point for a planned and co-ordinated approach to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development across the school in terms of a shared policy for the planning, delivery and monitoring of these aspects of pupil development. Such an approach would further improve the very good work that already exists in this area.

51. Provision for students' cultural development is excellent. In the last few years, much highly successful work has been done to provide an environment where cultural differences are recognised, developed and enhanced. Each department has a clear awareness of the need to affirm and celebrate cultural identity. Pupils are able to understand the influences upon their own cultural traditions and have a deep respect for the cultures of others. They are open to new ideas and participate fully in the activities celebrating other cultures. They develop excellent material for display around the school. There are many opportunities for pupils to be involved in activities that extend their cultural development. The PSHE curriculum provides a wealth of opportunities for students to develop an awareness of the rich variety of different cultures and traditions that exist in this country. For example, topics such as individual differences enable pupils to develop attitudes and values that recognise the diversity of cultures amongst their fellow pupils. Opportunities are provided on a regular basis for visits to museums, art galleries and the theatre. There are aspects of religious education that make a significant contribution, especially in terms of the study of different religions and the cultures that support them. Pupils understand the variety of cultural and multi-cultural influences through art. Opportunities are provided to appreciate art from Europe, Africa, India and North America, thus increasing pupils' understanding of cultural and multi-cultural influences. Opportunities also present themselves through dance. A dance group from the school took part in the launch of Black History month in Harrow. The wide range of cultures and styles represented in music reflects the diversity of cultural heritage that is both celebrated and encouraged in the school. Visits to other countries provide further opportunities for pupils to develop cultural awareness. A visit by the GCSE Spanish group to Barcelona in 2000 enabled pupils to appreciate language and culture at first hand. The use of poems from different cultures enables pupils to develop an understanding of cultural values and attitudes. The school prepares pupils very well for life in a multi-cultural society.
52. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good overall. The influence of the school's ethos enables pupils to demonstrate their values and beliefs in a safe and supportive environment. In religious education, pupils were encouraged to share their beliefs and values with others. They did this freely and with confidence, and other pupils showed a profound respect for their views. A well-directed discussion on the importance of miracles in different religions demonstrated that pupils were prepared to explore their own beliefs and those of others, thus developing knowledge, insight and appreciation of a range of views both religious and scientific. Assemblies take place once each week, for each year group. Assemblies are not used as a vehicle for spiritual development and do not constitute collective worship. Instead, the school concentrates heavily upon moral and social issues in assemblies as a deliberate policy. The well-planned assembly timetable includes topics that recognise and celebrate different religious festivals. Furthermore, the provision of a prayer room for Muslim pupils provides a valuable opportunity for pupils to practise their daily worship. Opportunities for the spiritual development of pupils were observed in some subjects. In English pupils use their imaginative and creative faculties through the writing of poetry. The citizenship programme aims to produce rounded individuals who are respectful of others and their views. The work of artists created to reflect spiritual and religious beliefs enables pupils to appreciate what inspires and motivates artists to be creative. In geography, teachers were supportive and developed a sense of self-worth in pupils. Pupils showed enthusiasm for and wonder of the natural world through opportunities for reflection.
53. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. The PSHE programme makes a major contribution. Topics such as attitudes to bullying, sex education, drugs awareness, values and family life, equal opportunities and ethical issues such as human rights provide a sound curriculum for discussion and the development of attitudes and values. The school has clear expectations of students knowing right from wrong and students respond very well when they are corrected. The citizenship programme makes a key contribution in encouraging pupils to link their learning with everyday life. The headteacher and staff are very good role models for pupils. Assemblies make a significant contribution to this area. Topics include prejudice and genocide. They explore and encourage pupils to form judgements about right and wrong actions. Pupils are encouraged and give generously to a variety of charities and many charitable events, such as provision for a local hospice, have been initiated by pupils. Several subjects contribute well in providing opportunities for moral development. In religious education, pupils are able to respond to

aspects of morality using their knowledge of religious and ethical issues. Pupils demonstrated their commitment to fair play in physical education, and their unquestioning acceptance of rules indicated a positive attitude towards competition. Issues such as the destruction of rain forests in one geography lesson enabled pupils to develop moral attitudes and form judgements about the need for conservation.

54. Provision for social development is very good. The life and work of the school as a whole demonstrates that pupils and adults have a respect for each other and are prepared to co-operate for a common good. The citizenship programme is an important resource in the provision for the social development of pupils. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and develop social understanding. Prefects have recently been introduced after considerable discussion. The school has demonstrated its commitment to pupils' personal development through the training of peer listeners by "Relate". This is a valuable resource and is well received by pupils. There is a school council that meets regularly with the headteacher. This enables pupils in all years to have a voice in school matters. Year councils also support this activity. The council has been instrumental in making changes to school uniform and the school environment, and was included in the consultation on the School Improvement Plan. Pupils are used as guides on parents' evenings and this provides a valuable opportunity to build confidence in their ability to interact with adults. In addition, all Year 9 pupils have one day on foyer duty. The PSHE curriculum provides many opportunities in this area. Topics such as rights and responsibilities, healthy environment, sex and love, citizenship, and decision-making skills all provide a valuable contribution to developing attitudes and fostering independent thinking. A variety of after school clubs also provide opportunities for social development. Assemblies on topics such as looking after self, cancer awareness and homelessness prompt pupils to reflect on their own contribution to society and the wider world. All subjects make an effective contribution to pupils' social development. Teachers encourage all pupils to collaborate with each other, and they ensure that all pupils are included. The quality of relationships in the school is excellent.
55. Since the last inspection, the provision for the cultural development of pupils has improved greatly. Moral development of pupils has continued to improve, as has the provision for social development. There has also been a significant improvement in the spiritual development of pupils although the fact that the statutory requirement for the daily act of collective worship is not met means that opportunities are missed to enhance this provision.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

56. The school is successful in maintaining good standards of health and safety, and of care for pupils' welfare and personal development. The excellent relationships between the pupils and their tutors and teachers ensure that pupils are confident in seeking advice. Support comes from several sources: from the well-established tutor system, from teachers who, like the tutors, know the pupils well and from the Peer Listening group. Parents are generally happy with the quality of support for their children.
57. From their early days in school pupils are trained to reflect on themselves and their progress. They are therefore well aware of their strengths and weaknesses and are given good advice on ways to improve their performance when their work is reviewed individually by tutors and teachers. These evaluations cover academic work and personal development and lead to further immediate support if there are any concerns. Support systems are well monitored by heads of year. Parents are involved if there are particular concerns, as well as at the time when decisions have to be made about their children's future such as when they choose their options for Years 10 and 11.
58. The updated assessment policy describes a clearly defined cycle of reporting, which provides for a significant contact with parents each term. Subject reports are carefully written and provide parents with detailed evidence of pupils' attainment and progress. This is confirmed by the increasing satisfaction expressed by parents at the information they receive from the school. The reports differ, however, in format from subject to subject and this makes it difficult for a pupil or

parent to compare across subjects and to gain an overall view. For example, in Year 10 the music report gives a current and a predicted GCSE grade, mathematics a National Curriculum grade, whilst in English one of two boxes spanning a broad range of GCSE grades is ticked. Effort grades appear on some subject reports but not others.

59. The tutorial system is a strength of the school. The policy of the school is for form tutors to move through the school with their forms. Tutors therefore get to know their pupils very well. They receive daily written feedback on the behaviour of their form in the previous day's lessons, and, through the joint review system, they play a pivotal role in monitoring pupil progress. This system comprises a ten minute individual interview between tutor and pupil, which complements well the information on academic progress contained in the subject reports. Pupils have a full opportunity to express opinions, to assess their own progress and to feel that they are valued. To prepare pupils for the review, there is a section in the PSHE programme on target setting. Targets focus on broader aspects than academic attainment alone. For example, the Year 11 review requires pupils to comment on their work experience and on what they hope to do the following year. In each year group the report has a box to give the number of commendations received.
60. Attendance and punctuality are closely monitored by heads of year; who work closely with tutors and the education welfare officers if needed. In general, parents are co-operative in accounting for absences. The school keeps in close touch with parents over attendance concerns. It tries to dissuade parents from taking holidays in term-time. This is not simple, however, as there is a wide range of backgrounds, countries of origin and religious beliefs represented in the pupil population. The school is aware of the identity of poor attenders whose attainment would be improved if they came to school more regularly. Members of staff are doing what they can to improve the situation.
61. The recent review of the behaviour policy has defined the high expectations of behaviour to be adopted by all members of staff. With these clear aims, the staff act with firmness and discretion. As a result, with very few exceptions, the management of behaviour in class is very good. This has a marked effect on the pace of learning and the very good relations forged between pupils and teachers. Pupils are motivated by praise and respond well to their tutor's encouragement to increase their commendations for good attitudes and behaviour. Staff record carefully incidents of unacceptable behaviour. These records show few occasions of bullying, sexism or racial abuse. The well- managed scheme for Peer Listening provides an outlet for younger pupils to resolve their difficulties with the aid of an older volunteer pupil. This works particularly well in cases of minor bullying, harassment or broken friendships. Pupils confirm that members of staff act quickly and efficiently if a more serious case occurs.
62. In order to establish high standards of behaviour, the school has resorted to above average levels of exclusions. This has had a beneficial effect in Years 8 and 9 where levels of exclusion have fallen. This is not the case in the upper school, particularly Year 10. Here almost half the pupils excluded repeated the offence, with two or more incidents of unacceptable behaviour in the same term. The majority of incidents recorded are for disruptive and unco-operative behaviour. These, coupled with physical or verbal abuse, give rise to the high levels of fixed term exclusions. Higher standards of behaviour having been established in the lower school, a review of the system of sanctions is needed with a view to reducing the level of fixed term exclusions.
63. Aspects of personal development are included in the well-developed programme of personal, social and health education. The programme covers sex education, drugs awareness and the requirements of a healthy diet. The opportunities provided for discussion in all classes helps pupils to explore issues themselves and to engage adults in testing their ideas. This is particularly evident in religious education in both key stages where pupils are encouraged to develop respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others. In all subjects, pupils are encouraged to comment on the work or ideas of their peers.
64. Child protection procedures follow local authority guidelines and members of staff are soon to be trained in up-to-date recommended practices. The governors are aware that these procedures have not been reviewed recently. The school provides good care for those pupils who require

medication or attention to injuries. Appropriate records are kept and parents are informed. Health and safety inspections are carried out under proper supervision. Defects are recorded and swiftly dealt with. No health and safety defects were outstanding at the time of the inspection.

65. At the time of the last report, the support and guidance provided for pupils were strengths of the school. This remains the case today. There have been improvements in the monitoring of academic progress, which is now satisfactory, and of behaviour, which is now good.
66. Procedures for assessing pupil attainment and progress are satisfactory. An updated school assessment policy was approved at the beginning of the current school year. Hence, much still remains to be done before it is fully implemented. It represents, however, a significant improvement upon the previous policy by going beyond general principles to give much fuller advice on practices and procedures.
67. At subject level there is much evidence of effective procedures. Physical education has its subject summary records stored on computer so that they are easily retrievable. Records in art are comprehensive and analytical and pupils are involved at the end of some lessons in evaluating the work of their peers. The mathematics department has a clear policy for recording and reporting on attainment; records of each pupil's progress are compiled using a wide range of test data and include predicted grades at GCSE. In a number of departments, however, the assessment of National Curriculum levels attained by pupils at or near the end of Year 9 is unreliable. For example, pupils in religious education are unclear about the standards they are reaching and what they have to do to improve. In English, the ongoing assessment does not enable pupils to gain a clear understanding of how they can improve their work. In ICT, all pupil work is assessed against these levels, but it is not made clear to pupils that they must satisfy more than just a small part of the criteria in order to claim that they have reached a given level. Teachers in modern languages collect detailed information on pupil performance in different aspects of the subject in their mark books. The lack of a common format, however, makes it difficult to form an overview of pupil attainment across the department. There are very good procedures in place for assessing pupils with special educational needs (SEN). For example, as these pupils move through the school the individual education plan for each pupil is updated with relevant additional information. These records are very well organised and managed, as are those maintained by learning support assistants. There is good communication between the learning support department and subject departments, which therefore have a high level of awareness about special needs. Taking the subjects as a whole practice is good in Years 8 and 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11.
68. A whole school system for tracking pupil progress through the years is still at an early stage of development. Information from the current software package used by the school does not provide an overview of how well individual pupils are progressing. The school carries out a useful annual analysis comparing the performance of boys and girls. This is especially important given the high percentage of boys in the school. Monitoring of the attainment of different ethnic groups should be given similar importance.
69. The use made of assessment information to guide curriculum planning is satisfactory. The high level of awareness of subject staff about special needs enables them to take good account of these in their lesson planning and to contribute in turn to the updating of individual education plans. Subject departments make use of a range of school data, including information about pupil attainment on entry and subject performance at the end of Year 9, in order to set targets for individual pupils in terms of a predicted GCSE examination grade. More use should, however, be made of the national data that is available on the expected levels of improvement between the end of Year 9 and the end of Year 11. Early in the school year heads of department are required through their line manager to produce a report on the latest GCSE examination results, evaluate them and propose a strategy for further improvement.
70. Many departments use assessment information well. The music curriculum for example is constantly adjusted in the light of how well pupils learn. In art pupils know clearly which aspects of art are being assessed and receive written guidance on what has to be done to raise their standard. Mathematics teachers mark pupils' work at the end of each section, and the results are

used to decide on the most appropriate level of work for each pupil in the next section. In science in Years 10 and 11 teachers match the level of work well to the targets set for each pupil and monitor progress effectively. The use of assessment information is, however, weak in some departments, such as in religious education and in English, where a new head of department is attempting to link assessment more closely to planning.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

71. The parents are supportive of the school and have very favourable views on how it is led and managed. They report that their children like the school. They are pleased with the progress their children make and the high expectations teachers have of their children. The degree of affirmation has increased in the last eighteen months. This is seen by comparing the information received from parents with that produced by the school when it conducted its own enquiries on the same lines. A minority of parents was unhappy with the amount of homework set and the limitations in the programme of extra-curricular activities. Some parents at the meeting felt that the school could improve its multi-cultural image through including the study of a wider range of religions. The inspectors considered that homework is generally correctly and regularly set. Its use is good in most subjects, satisfactory in some but in need of improvement in information and communication technology and geography. The provision for extra-curricular activities is good. There is a wide range of activities at lunchtime and after school, which, however, make better provision for boys than for girls. In addition there are residential and other visits. This report makes repeated reference to the very strong multi-cultural element in the school and the extensive provision for pupils regardless of their ethnicity or faith. However, the religious education syllabus concentrates on discrete studies in three different religions, namely Christianity, Islam and Judaism. In view of the close links between Christianity and Judaism, and the fact that many pupils are Hindu the school should review this policy.
72. The quality of information provided for parents is good. The prospectus is well produced and is helpful to new parents and pupils. Canons Link is a new termly publication that gives information about activities, successes and developments planned. It is well illustrated and appreciated by parents. Parents are informed about their children's progress by annual written reports. These are detailed and include a full and useful summary of the pupil's one-to-one review of progress by the tutor. These reports vary by subjects in format and what they say and are therefore not easy for parents to understand.
73. Letters to parents are friendly. They are direct where necessary; especially those which encourage better attendance. In matters of attendance and punctuality, a minority of parents do not support the school and fail to consider the effect non-attendance has on their children's progress.
74. The Friends of Canons High School has recently been founded. Already it is flourishing, with many parents involved in fund raising and helping with school events. Parental workshops have been introduced, initially to develop parents' skills in numeracy, literacy and ICT. New pupil planners facilitate better communications with homes. These are well used and give parents an insight into the work pupils are expected to do at home. Parents' consultation meetings are well organised. The school keeps in close contact by letter or phone if there is concern about a pupil's work or personal development.
75. The school continues to make good use of local services such as the Careers Service and local businesses when arranging work experience for its pupils. Good liaison with local colleges has always benefited pupils as they plan their futures. The school is currently working with Stanmore College to broaden the adult education offered to parents.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

76. The school is well led by an energetic and capable headteacher who has been at the school for about eighteen months. In that time he has gained the respect and confidence of governors and staff. Morale is high in the school. The level of parental satisfaction has also improved over that period including their views of the quality of leadership and management of the school. Many of the strengths in the school had been effectively maintained over the period since the last inspection, notably the high level of pupils' achievement by the end of Year 11 and the very good ethos in the school. The attention given to some of the key areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection report has recently increased and they are included in the latest school improvement plan produced about a year ago. The plan was developed through a thorough process, which effectively and appropriately involved the staff and governors. The views of parents and pupils were also sought. The plan contains an appropriate range of objectives, although there is insufficient emphasis on the need to develop literacy. Progress has been made but further work is required on many of the areas identified. The school is aware of this. The school also recently reviewed its aims and the new aims, which focus on ensuring high achievement through high quality teaching and learning, provision of a safe and orderly environment, working together and valuing and respecting all in the community, are clearly seen in the work of the school. In line with another of its aims the school is seeking to extend its use of new technologies. It has recently significantly improved provision in this area, however, there is still much to be done as its application in a number of departments is unsatisfactory, although it is very good in art and is well used in science. The very recent achievement of Technology College status will provide a major impetus for developments in this area.

77. The headteacher is effectively supported by an experienced group of senior staff, each of whom has clearly defined and significant responsibilities and who work together as a team. A more rigorous line management structure has been established and operates as part of the performance management system. This was a key issue for development identified in the last inspection. A new meeting structure has also been adopted. In addition to the senior management team and departmental and year team meetings, all heads of department and year meet regularly with the senior management team. This is a large group for making policy decisions since it represents almost half the teaching staff at the school. It provides a good consultative forum and is also a useful vehicle for seeking to ensure the effective and consistent implementation of policies. Senior members of staff were observed working very effectively with pupils and they manage difficult situations well. Over a period they have been influential in creating the excellent relationships, the very good pupil attitudes and the strong and effective commitment to inclusive practices. The pastoral team has a good blend of experienced well-established senior managers and younger heads of year. They operate effectively and to the benefit of the pupils. The heads of the science and English departments are recent appointments; in the case of English she took up her post a month before the inspection. The majority of departments are well led and managed including the mathematics department. Leadership and management are very good in physical education and music. Teaching and learning in lessons are good in religious education but there are aspects of the work of the department relating to the curriculum and assessment of pupils which are not satisfactory. The head of the religious education department is also a head of year and has a range of responsibilities and commitments in the dual roles.
78. The special needs department, encompassing the provision for higher achievers and those having English as an additional language, is very well led by an experienced and committed co-ordinator, who has also recently become a member of the senior management team. There is a strong element of teamwork and co-operation between all staff. Departmental documentation is very good, being clear and unambiguous in its detail. The very effective assessment and recording system is well established, with regular evaluations of individual and departmental procedures. The register of pupils with special needs is well maintained and incorporates a register of higher achievers. Where the pupils have statements of special needs, Annual Reviews and Transition Plans are well managed and up to date. In addition to the termly updating of individual education and pastoral care plans, the progress of all pupils with additional needs is monitored by the experienced and specialist team of teaching and support staff. Pupils' targets are set in consultation with pupils and parents, and issued to all subject teachers as a guide to the differing levels of need. The governor for special educational needs frequently liaises with staff and has a clear perception of the department's work.
79. There has not been the same focus on other key aspects of provision across the school, such as literacy, numeracy and ICT. The headteacher is progressively leading developments on ICT but there is not a powerful advocate at present for the other two. Whilst good work was seen in both areas, it is not guided by an overall strategy and provision is inconsistent. In the case of literacy this is a significant weakness. The school is aware of this and is looking to the new head of English to take the work forward. There is, however, much to be done and the situation is complicated by the high proportion of pupils with EAL who are at various stages of language acquisition. There has been and to a degree remains a lack of urgency in pursuing development of certain aspects of the school's curriculum, including cross-curricular provision. The library, however, continues to be very well managed by an able and well-qualified librarian to the benefit of both pupils and staff.
80. The provision for pupils with EAL is generally effectively led and managed and has improved since the last inspection. However, the recently appointed EAL specialist needs to grow into the role to be more effective in improving the quality of learning opportunities in this expanding area of need.
81. The chair of governors has been in post for about eighteen months and there are a number of new governors. The school has experienced difficulties in replacing a number of governors who left and there are five vacancies, including two for Local Education Authority representatives. As a group the governors exhibit a good knowledge of the school and its strengths and weaknesses and they

are clear about how they want it to develop. A number of the governors show a strong commitment to the school. The group presently depends to a significant extent on a small number of able, knowledgeable and committed individuals in key positions. They are influential and effective and justifiably have the confidence of their fellow governors. They and the headteacher are aware of the need to widen and strengthen this base and are working on it. Governors had not until recently reviewed a number of key policies and aspects of the school's provision. Working through the backlog is taking time as the chair is determined that each area is dealt with thoroughly and properly. The minutes of recent meetings of the governing body show that major policy decisions are explored and they discuss and come to decisions on aspects of substance. Governors have set targets for the headteacher as part of the performance management arrangements. Governors largely undertake their statutory functions effectively with the exception of the curricular provision. Areas of curricular non-compliance identified in the last report remain.

82. The school was reported to have a budget deficit at the last inspection and this re-appeared about two years ago. The headteacher and governors have taken action to reduce the deficit including declaring some redundancies. The most recent projections indicate that the deficit will be eliminated by the end of this financial year (April 2002). The school uses its budget appropriately to support its educational priorities. The decision to increase the budget for resources by £20,000 despite the difficult budgetary situation is a good example of this. The school has actively sought additional funding to meet its future aims and the successful proposal for Technology College status is a good example of this. It applies best value principles in its work and the governors provided a number of examples of this, such as benchmarking against similar schools, consulting with parents and obtaining the most cost-effective services.
83. The School Manager was not present during the inspection but the headteacher and chair of finance provided information on the budget. Day-to-day systems in the school operate effectively and efficiently and the use of computer systems, such as in finance, has been improved since the last inspection. The school is presently developing a system to track pupil progress and assist in target setting. Monitoring of pupil progress and target setting is better developed in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 8 and 9, where target setting is at an early stage of development. This is an area which requires significant further development and should be given a high priority. The systems in the school are improving and the headteacher is seeking to make the monitoring of the quality of provision, particularly the teaching, more systematic. The school has been successful in significantly improving teaching since the last inspection: it needs to consolidate this through establishing more thorough and systematic evaluation and development of the quality of teaching by heads of department in conjunction with members of the senior management team. There are examples of good practice among departments but this is a weaker aspect of the work of the school, which is presently unsatisfactory in English and religious education.
84. The match of teachers and support staff to the curriculum is satisfactory overall, it is very good in mathematics but unsatisfactory in design and technology where there have been difficulties in appointing permanent staff and technician support is limited. Staffing levels within the special needs department are satisfactory. Relevant training is ongoing and all staff feel well supported and confident to deal with the wide range of pupils' needs. However, there are insufficient classroom assistants to provide support in all subjects, and this impedes the progress of pupils with language and literacy difficulties. The demands for support for pupils with EAL are high and this is an area where a review of the extent of provision and its current use is needed. The induction of staff new to the school, including newly qualified teachers, is good. Both the induction of staff and their professional development are well organised. In-service training is linked to school and personal needs. The professional development manager monitors all training requests and evaluates the quality of providers.
85. Overall, the standard of accommodation is just satisfactory. However, there are few areas where it is good and it is unsatisfactory in science, music and physical education. In science one laboratory has recently been refurbished as part of an ongoing programme but five others are in a poor state and this is on occasions affecting the quality of learning. In music there are insufficient specialist rooms for appropriate instrumental practice. Accommodation in physical education is

outdated and restricted; it inhibits curricular development and needs to be supplemented. There is good provision in English, art and drama, and the standard of accommodation in ICT is greatly enhanced by the recent creation of an attractive suite of rooms with good resources. The accommodation for teaching pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory, but the recent completion of a new learning support unit with disabled access and facilities will significantly enhance this. Departmental organisation in most subject areas is aided by the close grouping of teaching rooms. The quality of the environment is enhanced by the displays of pupils' work in classrooms and around the school.

86. The proportion of the school budget allocated to the provision of learning resources is in line with the national average for similar schools. Resources for most subjects are at least adequate and for some they are good. Art, religious education, science and physical education make good use of ICT resources. History lacks some essential resources for modular work. The library provides a range of good resources and the development of a computerised management system enhances pupils' learning opportunities. Pupils use the library well both during teaching hours and at lunchtimes. Overall, the number of books available to pupils is good. The library provides good access to computers, CD-ROM, the Internet, as well as new fiction and non-fiction books. A well-catalogued section containing books written in languages other than English reflects the multi-ethnic nature of the school but the range of books available is limited. The school has a pupil to computer ratio of 7.3:1, which is close to the government target for secondary schools. Computers provide a valuable learning resource; pupils benefit from a newly completed computer network across the school, that includes Internet and CD access. Science, for example, is able to make use of computers for data logging.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

87. To improve further the standards of work and attainment the governors, headteacher and staff should
- (1) improve the provision for the development of literacy in the school, including that for EAL pupils who have basic skills in English but are still not effectively accessing the full curriculum (paragraphs: 7, 26, 29, 34, 45, 79, 80, 84, 91, 92, 95, 96, 100, 101, 102, 105, 106, 127, 138, 161, 166, 172 and 182)
 - (2) improve pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 (paragraphs: 2, 6, 8, 10, 97, 112 and 121)
 - (3) ensure that the curriculum fully meets the needs of all pupils in Years 10 and 11 and that, in particular, the provision of religious education and information and communication technology fully meets requirements (paragraphs: 15, 41, 42, 81, 120 and 214)
 - (4) ensure that the quality of teaching is systematically evaluated to bring about further improvement (paragraphs: 83, 109 and 223)
 - (5) review the application of sanctions with a view to reducing the level of fixed term exclusions (paragraphs: 18, 19 and 62).
88. In addition the following less significant weaknesses need attention. The further improvement of assessment procedures and the use of assessment information (paragraphs: 37, 42, 58, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 72, 83, 104 and 131); increasing the provision within the timetable structure for the adoption of different types of pupil grouping (paragraphs: 26, 43, 120, 123 and 192); improving the use of and access to ICT in a number of departments (paragraphs: 39, 76, 120, 139, 150, 165, 173, 175, 177, 178, 196 and 204); further developing the curricular links with the main feeder middle schools (paragraphs: 47 and 121); and improving the accommodation for science, physical education and music (paragraphs: 85, 133, 204, 208 and 214).

89. The school is aware of its strengths and areas of weakness and the above appear in its most recent school improvement plan or were identified during the week of inspection, although there was insufficient emphasis on the development of literacy and the improvement of assessment and its use.

THE PROVISION FOR AND STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS WITH ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE (EAL)

The quality of provision for pupils with English as an additional language is **satisfactory** in Years 8 and 9 and **good** in Years 10 and 11.

Strengths

- A marked improvement since the last inspection in the support given to those at the early stages of language learning.
- Pupils feel confident to ask for help and to share ideas in a secure environment in small withdrawal groups.
- EAL teaching and support staff, many of whom are bilingual, have a good knowledge of how the first language can be used to support the learning of English.
- The provision for EAL is well led and managed.

Areas for improvement

- The consistency of support across the school, particularly for those pupils who are beyond the initial stage of language acquisition but still have difficulties in effectively using more sophisticated language.
- A sharper distinction between provision for English as an additional language and special educational needs to enable pupils to receive the most effective language and learning support.
- A better focus for the 'options support' programme in withdrawal lessons.
- Development of the role of the EAL specialist teacher, particularly in planning with and working alongside subject specialists.

90. Since the last inspection, improvement in the achievement of pupils at the initial stages of learning English has been good and it is now satisfactory in Years 8 and 9. Pupils' achievement during Years 10 and 11 is good, as is their attainment by the end of Year 11. They do well in GCSE examinations.

91. Most pupils with EAL demonstrate that they have acquired sufficient language skills to function effectively and they are well integrated into the mainstream. Their achievement is satisfactory in all subjects in Years 8 and 9 and is good in Years 10 and 11. The subject teachers, on the whole, have strategies for meeting pupils' general needs. They also receive support for those who are at the early stages of learning English. However, some pupils at more advanced levels often struggle to do justice to their academic potential due to limitations in their understanding and skills in using subject specific language. They have less opportunity for supported speaking and listening and fewer effective models of spoken and written language than pupils at earlier stages of language acquisition. This slows down their progress and affects their attainment particularly in Years 8 and 9.

92. The severity of need determines the amount of support provided and those provided with intensive support make the fastest progress. Only 54 pupils receive support on a withdrawal basis across the school, most of which is aimed at catching up with homework, class or coursework particularly for Years 10 and 11, though there is also some effective induction for new and refugee pupils. In class specialist support is good where available, but it is not consistent across the school and departments. EAL and other staff, including support assistants for special needs who are mostly bilingual, enable pupils to access the curriculum by a variety of teaching strategies including the use of first language and resources such as the use of bilingual dictionaries and occasionally the use of peer or 'buddy' help. All work is firmly placed within the National Curriculum. For example, in a mixed induction group of nine pupils from Years 8, 9 and 10, pupils learnt about comparing temperature and weather in Britain and other parts of the world. They

learnt the accurate use of words such as hotter, colder, warmer, heavier, measure and rainfall. Pupils were developing their speaking and listening skills well. They were getting more confident in reading and in recording their work using symbols and labels as a result of the good support for learning provided by the teacher and the learning assistant to each of them. This enabled pupils to achieve well. In a physical education lesson observed in Year 9, the teacher had planned very well to take account of the needs of three new pupils with little English, two Kosovan boys and one Indian girl in a class of 26. The teacher used appropriate strategies including very effective demonstrations and simplified instructions as a result of which the pupils made progress well beyond expectations, both in understanding the language and the rules of badminton. However, where there is a wide range of ability and no additional support, regardless of the best efforts of the teacher, initial learners with EAL do not achieve well. For example, pupils in Years 10 and 11 who have not yet acquired basic skills in English find it particularly difficult to learn a modern European language.

93. On the whole, pupils with EAL respond very well, eagerly and readily as they gain confidence and feel secure. They collaborate well with each other as a diverse multi-cultural and multi-lingual group and are happy to share their experiences and learning with each other. Some who have been in the school much longer than the more recent arrivals help their peers by translating for them.
94. Pupils with EAL take part fully in the activities the school provides and withdrawal is kept to the minimum. They are assessed on entry to school in Year 8 or when they join during the year and the identification of those needing additional support is made and recorded. In addition, regular assessments are made to ascertain pupils' progress and to identify any areas of particular concern. However, as the majority of pupils in the school have English as an additional language, and the support for both is provided through the learning development department, distinction between EAL and special educational needs sometimes becomes blurred and unclear.
95. Since the 1997 inspection, support for pupils with English as an additional language has improved for pupils who are at the early stages of learning English. The very recently appointed teacher of EAL (January 2002) focuses on these pupils and those who are withdrawn from classes for the 'options support' programme for additional support with homework or course work. During the inspection, no effective partnership teaching with subject teachers was observed in lessons, a practice that would benefit both teachers and especially pupils in improving their skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing. In Year 10 the EAL specialist supports the subject teachers in technology and humanities but they do not plan their teaching and use of resources together. Planning for the use of the limited provision of specialist assistance is not sufficiently strategic and in some instances support is too dependent upon the interests of individual teachers and departments. Given the high number of pupils with EAL, more high quality culturally relevant aids and other learning resources, such as bilingual books and dictionaries, are required to support pupils' learning and make them more independent.
96. The provision for pupils with EAL is generally effectively led and managed and has improved since the last inspection. However, the recently appointed EAL specialist needs to grow into the role to be more effective in improving the quality of learning opportunities in this crucial and expanding area of need.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	136
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	69

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	24	62	45	4	0	0
Percentage	0.7	17.6	45.6	33.1	2.9	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	Y8 – Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	702
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	183

Special educational needs	Y8 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	26
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	205

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	452

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	100
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	12

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.5
National comparative data	8.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.3
National comparative data	1.1

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	103	73	176

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	35	46	42
	Girls	38	44	35
	Total	73	90	77
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	42 (52)	51 (47)	44 (37)
	National	64 (63)	66 (65)	66 (59)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	21 (18)	32 (24)	15 (14)
	National	31 (28)	43 (42)	34 (30)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	32	59	49
	Girls	33	47	40
	Total	65	106	89
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	38 (32)	60 (55)	51 (57)
	National	65 (64)	68 (66)	64 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	14 (9)	31 (21)	17 (21)
	National	31 (31)	42 (39)	33 (29)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	110	79	189

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	42	96	103
	Girls	33	69	78
	Total	75	165	181
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	43 (53)	90 (93)	98 (100)
	National	48 (47)	91 (91)	96 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score	School	38.1 (41.4)

per pupil	National	39 (38.4)
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Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	22
Black – African heritage	55
Black – other	22
Indian	302
Pakistani	30
Bangladeshi	9
Chinese	4
White	143
Any other minority ethnic group	133

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	11	0
Black – African heritage	26	2
Black – other	5	0
Indian	18	0
Pakistani	2	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	50	1
Other minority ethnic groups	31	2

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y8 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	45
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15.6

Education support staff: Y8 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	20
Total aggregate hours worked per week	467.5

Deployment of teachers: Y8 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	75.5%
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Average teaching group size: Y8 – Y11

Key Stage 3	20.9
Key Stage 4	19.6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
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	£
Total income	2,442,504
Total expenditure	2,403,894
Expenditure per pupil	3,338
Balance brought forward from previous year	-79,204
Balance carried forward to next year	-40,594

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	18.6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	14
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	4
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	702
Number of questionnaires returned	229

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	45	48	4	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	38	54	6	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	42	46	7	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	48	14	3	2
The teaching is good.	38	51	7	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	37	47	11	1	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	44	47	2	2	5
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	35	3	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	30	51	11	1	7
The school is well led and managed.	35	47	7	0	10
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	42	46	6	0	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	27	41	17	1	14

Other issues raised by parents

- Fourteen parents attended a meeting with the registered and lay inspectors before the inspection. Their comments broadly reflected the generally positive responses to the questionnaire. Whilst individuals raised specific issues there was no general consensus on these.

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

ENGLISH

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

Strengths

- The teaching, which is of good quality.
- The provision for lower ability pupils, including the use of learning support assistants and differentiated worksheets for pupils with special educational needs.
- Consideration of spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues in lessons is good.

Areas for improvement

- Attainment in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9.
- The method of assessment used in the department does not enable pupils to gain a clear understanding of how they can improve their work.
- The introduction of the Key Stage 3 strategy in literacy and development of language across the curriculum has been limited.
- The provision for higher ability pupils.

97. In the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 in 2001, the percentage of pupils obtaining Level 5 or higher was well below the national average and the percentage of pupils obtaining Level 6 or higher was below the national average. The inspection evidence shows that the attainment of pupils by the end of Year 9 is below national expectations. In the 2001 tests, girls achieved better results than boys in terms of average points scores, but to a lesser extent than nationally. Year 8 pupils are able to use prefixes and to write about poems and books that they have read. They can construct spider diagrams to demonstrate what they have learned about texts being studied. Year 9 pupils can describe the characters in 'Twelfth Night' and know how to lay out a formal letter.
98. The GCSE results in 2001 in both English and English literature were below the national average. In 2001 girls performed better than boys in both subjects, but to a lesser extent than nationally. The inspection evidence also indicates that the attainment of pupils by the end of Year 11 is below national averages. It is, however, higher relative to national averages than at the end of Year 9. The results should be seen in the context that almost two-thirds of the pupils in the school are from homes where English is not the first language and that attainment on entry is judged to be generally below national norms and well below in terms of pupils' English language skills.
99. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 8 and 9 and good progress in Years 10 and 11. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language make good progress in all years but there is scope for improvement in the provision of work for pupils of higher ability who are sometimes insufficiently challenged in lessons. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory by the end of Year 9 and it is good by the end of Year 11.
100. Pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is below national expectations in all years. In most lessons pupils respond to questions when asked by teachers but are less likely to volunteer information or to take part in argument or discussion. Their answers are often short. Pupils are able to contribute to group discussions, for example when discussing the importance of themes and characters in a Year 11 lesson on 'Of Mice and Men', and some can read aloud expressively from texts, for example, in a Year 11 lesson on poems from other cultures. However, some Year 9 pupils find difficulty in recalling discussion in earlier work, on, for example, alliteration.
101. Standards of reading are below national expectations in all years. Pupils read a range of novels, plays and poetry, including Greek legends and poems from other cultures with varying degrees of fluency. Year 8 pupils benefit from weekly library periods. These are currently being expanded to focus on full texts and research skills.

102. Pupils' attainment in writing is below national expectations in all years. Year 8 pupils can write poems and rap songs about Greek legends and Year 10 pupils can make personal and critical comments on love poetry. By the end of Year 9 pupils can use similes well but are less secure about metaphors. By the end of Year 11 they recognise terms such as soliloquies and show knowledge of the plot of 'Romeo and Juliet'. Some pupils write short answers in lessons.
103. Attitudes to learning and behaviour are good in all years. Most pupils take care in the presentation of their work but a limited number of lower ability pupils do not take sufficient care in presentation. Year 9 pupils respond eagerly to the presentation of characters and the plot of 'Twelfth Night'. In Year 10 pupils respond well to the powerful expression in the poem 'Blessing' and co-operate well in a dramatised reading of the poem 'Our Love Now', offering different interpretations of the meaning of the poem in group-devised dramatised readings. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, take part in all activities appropriately. A limited number of Year 10 pupils do not always follow the reading of the text being studied in class. Relationships between pupils and teachers are very good in all years and pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language make good progress in all years.
104. Teaching is good in all years and this enables pupils to make good progress from the level at which they enter the school in Year 8 to Year 11, where pupils' attainment is closer to the national average. Learning is satisfactory in Years 8 and 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of their subject, plan lessons effectively and have appropriate expectations of pupils. They use a range of different teaching methods, including the use of starter activities, plenary sessions, 'cloze' techniques and group, individual and pair work. Teachers manage lessons well and make good use of time, support staff and resources, including the use of learning support assistants and differentiated work sheets for pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language. The quality and use of ongoing assessment is unsatisfactory at present as it does not enable pupils to gain a clear understanding of how they can improve their work. The department has identified priorities for change in this area. Homework is used efficiently to extend and expand on work in lessons.
105. The quality of teaching in Year 10 enables pupils to improve their knowledge and skills in order to, for example, draw links between individual love poems and love poetry in general. Teaching also enables pupils to make creative efforts by, for example, exemplifying what culture means to them in a Year 11 lesson or writing imaginative similes in a Year 8 lesson. Skilful questioning by the teacher gradually brings a group of Year 9 pupils to an understanding of why the poem 'Flannan Isle' is frightening. In less effective lessons the teaching is too teacher-centred for the pupils to make progress and the achievement of higher ability pupils is restricted. In two Year 9 lessons on 'Twelfth Night' there was a disparity between teaching and learning because the complexity of the language in the play inhibited the pupils' progress. Productivity, pace of working in lessons and the ability to concentrate in lessons is satisfactory in Years 8 and 9 and good in Years 10 and 11.
106. The quality and range of learning activities is satisfactory in Years 8 and 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. There is evidence of the development of literacy in the department in the ability of pupils to define key literary terms such as similes and soliloquies and words related to English are placed on the walls in departmental rooms. The school promotes elements of good practice in literacy in several subjects in the curriculum. Key words related to the subject are placed on the wall in, for example, drama and science rooms. In mathematics key words related to the subject are given to pupils to be placed in exercise books and pupils are able to explain the contents of tables. In humanities lessons pupils are able to use words specific to history such as 'reign' and 'realm'. The lack of a specific policy on language across the curriculum restricts the development of literacy in the school. There are effective links with the drama department, particularly in the study of Shakespeare in Year 9. There are also opportunities for pupils to take part in extra-curricular activities such as trips to the theatre.
107. A training day to introduce the Key Stage 3 Strategy was held in October, which was attended by all teaching staff, learning assistants and the librarian at the school. During the day all teachers visited local feeder middle schools to observe the teaching of literacy and numeracy. The

department is beginning to make an audit of provision and an action plan for the full introduction of the Key Stage 3 Strategy for literacy in Year 8 in September 2002. Some elements of the strategy, such as the three-part lesson structure of starter activity, main activity and plenary session, have already been introduced effectively in Year 8. The quality of teaching in these lessons is good. It is too early to make a judgement of the effectiveness of the strategy on pupils' learning but there has already been a marked improvement in the pace of lessons and the quality of learning in Year 8 lessons as a result of the partial introduction of the strategy. The newly appointed head of department has the capacity to introduce the strategy effectively and fully by September 2002. Other members of staff in the department are also clear about the aims of the strategy and are committed to the processes involved.

108. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Examples of this are the study of issues related to racism in a study of 'Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry' in a Year 11 lesson, the opportunity to involve pupils with a knowledge of Gujerati more closely in a poem linked to that culture, 'Search for My Tongue', and the opportunity in a Year 8 lesson to consider issues related to death in a study of 'Funeral Blues' by W H Auden.
109. Leadership and management in the department are satisfactory. Members of the department have the capacity to make the changes required to ensure that the monitoring and evaluation of the subject's performance, which is unsatisfactory at present, is improved. Schemes of work for the subject are detailed and appropriate and the department has a shared commitment to improve the subject. Effective use is made of ICT in the department. Teachers and support staff are appropriate to the needs of the curriculum. Accommodation in the department is good with a number of English classrooms in proximity and with attractive subject displays on the wall. Learning resources in the department are good with a reasonable collection of textbooks and audio-visual materials.
110. Since the last inspection the quality of teaching has improved in all years. However, some of the issues raised in the last inspection, such as the provision for higher ability pupils and the need for close monitoring of pupil performance, remain areas for further development.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- Pupils' achievement in GCSE is above expectation.
- Pupils' attitude to their work is very good.
- Teaching and learning are good in both key stages.
- Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are very good.
- Leadership is strong.
- Teachers have a commitment to high achievement for all pupils.

Areas for improvement

- Attainment in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9.
- The use of plenary sessions, as part of the numeracy strategy, is under-developed.
- The pace of parts of some lessons is too slow.
- Information and communication technology is not used sufficiently.
- Opportunities for setting pupils by ability are too limited.
- The time allocation for Year 11 pupils is at a minimum level.

111. When they come to the school pupils' standards in mathematics are below the national average. They have made good progress by the end of Year 11, when they are working in line with the national average.

112. Pupils' attainment in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 in 2001 was well below the national average. Results have been static during recent years. Pupils' performance in the 2001 tests is the same as that for similar schools but better for the more able pupils attaining Level 6 or higher. Half of the pupils had improved by two levels or more by Year 9 compared to their mathematics test result in Year 6, a positive achievement. Pupils achieve better results than in science and similar to those in English. In 2000 and 2001 girls' results were better than boys' but were not as good in earlier years. The percentage of pupils achieving GCSE grades A*-C in 2001 is very close to the national average and was above the average in 2000. Pupils achieve well in GCSE mathematics compared to their test performance at the end of Year 9. Results in mathematics at GCSE are better than in most other subjects including English and science. Boys outperformed girls in 2001 but attained less well in 2000.
113. Inspection evidence shows that overall attainment for the present Year 9 is just below the national average and pupils' achievement is good. More able pupils convert large and small numbers to standard form, simplify algebraic expressions and construct cumulative frequency graphs. They are less confident in interpreting powers of numbers, e.g. in determining half of 2 to the power 20. Middle ability pupils solve simultaneous equations, understand the concept of symmetry and complete accurate line graphs. They make errors in determining bearings and are unsure about properties of isosceles triangles in their work in geometry. Lower ability pupils understand and use basic decimals and fractions but are less sure about percentages. They struggle to calculate areas of rectangles and triangles using squared paper.
114. By the end of Year 11 pupils' attainment is in line with the national average and achievement is good. More able pupils understand and use surds, factorise quadratic expressions, make use of vectors, calculate the volume of a triangular prism and determine the standard deviation of a set of data. Middle ability pupils use trial and improvement to solve quadratic equations, determine areas of circles, calculate probability using probability trees and use and apply their mathematics effectively to investigate number patterns. Lower ability pupils show knowledge and understanding of some basic algebra. They are sometimes unsure about place value in pinpointing decimal numbers on a number line and find it difficult to calculate volumes of solids by counting cubes when some cubes are hidden in a 2-D representation of the shape.
115. Pupils' attitude to their work is very good, and their behaviour is good, in nearly all lessons. Relationships with each other and with teachers are very positive. Pupils of different cultures and backgrounds work very well together. They show respect for their teachers, attempt class-work tasks conscientiously and are fully involved in class discussions. Pupils are interested in mathematics and show particular strength in the way they work independently on tasks in the individual work-card scheme used in the department. In a few cases, towards the end of a lesson, pupils relax too much, join in off-task conversation and the pace of work dips. Although in most cases pupils present their work satisfactorily, some work in exercise books is rather scrappy.
116. Teaching and learning are good in both key stages. Teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of mathematics and are enthusiastic about it. This is transmitted to the pupils, enabling them, not only to make steady progress in the subject, but also to enjoy the subject. Teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy is well established, encouraging pupils to use correct terminology and complete calculations accurately. Teachers routinely emphasise the precise meaning of key mathematical terms such as discrete and continuous, or median and mode, so that pupils begin to use and interpret these correctly. In the best lessons teachers fully involve pupils in explaining tasks and methods in straightforward language so that all pupils in the class develop a much better understanding of the process. For example, in a very good Year 10 lesson on averages the teacher displayed a frequency table showing the numbers of pets in forty households. He asked pupils to explain what each column in the table represented and then to explain how the arithmetic mean, median and mode could be calculated. Teacher and pupils discussed the various incorrect, and partly correct, methods that emerged and pupils themselves proceeded to explain how each average should be determined using a correct method. The strategy of using pupils themselves as tutors for the whole class brought about significantly improved understanding for all of them.

117. Teachers plan lessons thoroughly and have high expectations of what pupils know, understand and can do. The individualised learning scheme enables teachers to set tasks appropriate to pupils' needs so that they achieve well most of the time. However, the pace of work dips towards the end of some lessons when certain pupils lose concentration and become involved in desultory conversations. In most cases teachers manage pupils' behaviour well but, at times, find it difficult to cope with the multitude of demands arising from the individualised scheme so that pupils wait too long for attention. It is better when a support assistant is available to share the load. In these cases pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Teachers use resources effectively to enhance learning and pupils are confident and secure in selecting appropriate materials for the tasks they undertake. Teachers take considerable trouble to assess pupils' work and are diligent in following up any issues that arise. Homework is set regularly but can lack variety.
118. There is effective leadership in the way the Key Stage 3 strategy for mathematics is being implemented. Teachers in the department completed the audit of provision, discussed findings as a group and then at a meeting with the local authority adviser. This has led to potentially significant development of the mathematics scheme of work that will be supported by a consultant from a local university department of education. At present there is a positive impact on teaching and learning as a result of changes already made. Teachers routinely use starter activities based on the numeracy strategy to improve pupils' mental agility and confidence. For example, one teacher used carefully selected 'follow me' cards distributed to pupils based on their abilities while another began lessons with a, b, c and d represented by positive and negative integers and fractions for pupils to reach various target numbers by formulating algebraic expressions. Both methods are successful in interesting and challenging pupils across the ability range so that they achieve higher standards. The department is starting to compare notes on these successful starter activities and it is important for each teacher to vary activities and not just keep repeating their own favourite. The use of plenary sessions to summarise and review what has taken place in lessons is under-developed. The individualised learning scheme does not lend itself easily to this feature because pupils complete a wide range of tasks on different topics in a lesson. The department is starting to consider ways of overcoming this difficulty and the involvement of the adviser and consultant is constructive. Thirty pupils attended the summer 'catch up' programme and a sample of them found it helped improve their knowledge and understanding. For example, one pupil particularly enjoyed the visit to a local ten-pin bowling club to collect data on numbers of skittles knocked down. These scores were later represented in various ways such as bar graphs and pie charts. The head of department, who is also numeracy co-ordinator, is providing sessions for parents of 'catch up' pupils to help them improve their own knowledge and understanding and become much more aware of their children's needs. This is an excellent innovation as part of the school's family learning programme.
119. Pupils use numeracy satisfactorily in other subjects overall; more effectively in science and art than in geography and history. In science pupils employ algebra confidently, use calculators effectively and measure accurately. They can construct and interpret various graphs successfully. In design and technology pupils measure quantities accurately and interpret graphs such as bar and pie charts. Pupils cope satisfactorily with spreadsheets in information and communication technology. In art pupils use scale and proportion skilfully in direct observational drawings. There is not, as yet, a whole school policy to co-ordinate the use of numeracy across the curriculum.
120. The department is managed effectively and it shares a commitment to high achievement for all pupils. Its teachers are very experienced yet open to new ideas. There has been good progress overall since the previous inspection. There are more opportunities for whole class input and discussion, particularly at the start of lessons. Practice for end of Year 9 tests is organised better. Pupils' mental and oral work is improving. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in mathematics are very good and are being used as an example for other departments. Teachers give freely of their time to provide a wide range of extra-curricular activities available such as homework classes and booster sessions. There are good opportunities for gifted and talented pupils through the UK mathematics challenge competition and early GCSE entry is possible. Scope for grouping pupils by mathematical ability on the

school timetable is very limited and teachers can become over-stretched by the need to cater for all abilities in one class. The time allocated to mathematics in the school timetable is satisfactory in Years 8-10 but at a minimum level in Year 11. This is likely to have a negative impact on standards in the long run. The department is at an early stage in making use of computers and programmable calculators to regularly support mathematics teaching and learning.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- The improvement in teaching since the last inspection.
- Increased use of ICT in classes.
- The positive relationships between both staff and pupils and between pupils.

Areas for improvement

- Standards of attainment in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9.
- The application of consistent marking standards.
- The accommodation.

121. Pupils enter the school with below average attainment; well below in terms of pupils' English language skills. The first year of the Key Stage 3 science course is taught in Middle Schools and although liaison between the different schools is improving pupils still exhibit a wide range of different science experience on entry. In Year 9 many pupils achieve Level 5 in their scientific enquiry. They are able to repeat observations where necessary to obtain consistent results in, for example, reacting acids with metals. Pupils are used to finding information from practical evidence and forming their own conclusions. Observations and measurements are represented graphically where appropriate, and pupils understand how to draw conclusions from these findings. A range of sources of information is used so that pupils have to make decisions about appropriate conclusions. Many pupils are familiar with using word equations to describe chemical reactions, although only a few pupils are able to use symbolic equations. More opportunity should be created for pupils to design their own experiments and make predictions about the anticipated outcomes. The attainment levels by the end of Year 9 have been well below the national average with 44 per cent reaching National Curriculum Level 5 or above in 2001. The current Year 9 pupils have targets set at 52 per cent at Level 5 or above and evidence indicates that these targets will be met showing some improvement on previous levels. Current progress is satisfactory.
122. GCSE results are below the national average but in the upper quartile for similar schools in terms of the percentage of pupils achieving grades A*-C. This demonstrates that good progress is being made throughout Years 10 and 11. Many pupils are working towards high levels in scientific enquiry, demonstrating that they can use scientific explanations from a range of sources, evaluating them and applying those that help them draw conclusions. Pupils understand physical processes and can give examples based on practical experience of wide applications, for example light refraction and internal reflection. Many pupils can comment critically on factors that affect our environment, drawing conclusions from a number of sources and their own evidence. They are used to using symbols to represent chemical equations and can successfully balance these equations. Individual targets for Year 11 pupils seem realistic and present evidence shows that they should be achieved putting the department's results near the national average.
123. Standards of teaching have improved since the last inspection and are now satisfactory in both key stages. Teaching mixed ability groups throughout the school places high demands on teachers. Examples of good classroom management and a high degree of support for each group of pupils were seen in a number of science lessons. For example, in a lesson on population where a computer was used to supply Internet references for one group while another group studied worksheets designed for their level of ability, and the teacher supported some individual pupils who did not understand a particular point. The pace of the lesson was conducted at a rate that was challenging for all the pupils. The learning outcomes from this lesson were good for the whole range of pupils in the class.
124. The schemes of work for Key Stage 3 are well designed and follow an agreed system which all teachers apply. The coverage of the work required for the whole key stage needs to be completed within Year 8 and 9. This has led to undue time pressure on satisfactory completion of work, and contributed to the well below average attainment at the end of the key stage. Good progress is

seen by the end of Year 11, and this is in part due to the efforts of the teachers to provide individual support at levels appropriate for every pupil. Examples of such work are seen in lessons on environmental factors, and also discussions on the use of pesticides.

125. Good use is made of pupil data to set targets and monitor progress. After school sessions are available for pupils, although only a few take full advantage of this provision. Teachers provide good support for pupils with special needs including those of high ability. Additional targeting of pupils who are underachieving would result in a closer match with the targets set for the end of Year 11. This could be achieved through mentoring activities.
126. There is an increased use of ICT in science teaching. Several examples were observed where this provision added value to the quality of the learning experience for the pupils. Examples included the use of a computer to project the view from an Intel microscope focused on fossils and crystals, of a data-logger to record results of a radiation experiment before the class in real time and of a computer to project images from data logging changes in an environment. This skill is developed by some members of the department and should be shared throughout the department.
127. The department has made some progress in adopting a literacy strategy through an emphasis on the use of key words. More work needs to be done to extend opportunities for pupils to write more independently. Oral work is generally good, with pupils respecting others' views. Good examples of the application of numeracy in science were observed. Examples include; good use of calculations on distance and time to create graphs, accurate measurement of angles in work on light and refraction, and good conversion to appropriate units of measurement in distance work.
128. A more consistent marking policy is needed across the science department. Currently, differing standards are observed across the department. Homework is set regularly and used well within the context of the specific lessons.
129. Pupils are able to develop practical skills in a variety of contexts. In Years 10 and 11 pupils demonstrated that they could take measurements accurately, record relevant results and interpret them intelligently, developing their investigative skills. In Years 8 and 9 these skills are not as well developed but pupils are able to organise and manage their practical activities to achieve satisfactory results. Support teachers are constructive in the way they support both the class teacher and individual pupils. The learning outcomes are enhanced for these targeted pupils.
130. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good. Teachers know their pupils, their strengths and weaknesses, and are able to support them appropriately. Pupils respect others and there are good examples of pupils supporting each other. Boys and girls often work together on practical activities and this works well. Often one pupil will help another when there are difficulties.
131. Higher ability pupils are challenged at appropriate levels in Years 10 and 11 through the use of additional material, extra worksheets, more difficult material, or higher expectations from the teacher. The pupils in this stage generally have a clear picture of their own attainment levels and what they need to do to improve. In Years 8 and 9 there is more work to do to establish this situation.
132. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding in science. They are in general an experienced team with two temporary posts. The science curriculum needs permanent posts to adequately cover the full range of the curriculum. Technician support is good and an equipment audit is currently being completed. Equipment levels are adequate except for some shortages in specialist kit. There is an increasing stock of ICT equipment. Textbooks are not issued to pupils but are available for class use. A high volume of worksheets is used especially in providing differentiated material for different groups of pupils.
133. Accommodation is unsatisfactory. There are no health and safety issues. Five laboratories and adjoining preparation rooms are in a poor state of decoration and repair. One laboratory has been refurbished and is ready for adoption and a rolling programme of further work is planned. Learning outcomes have been affected by deficiencies in the accommodation. A lack of blinds, for

example, has made the projection of images on a screen impossible to read. Light experiments have been conducted in poor conditions where there is no black-out facility or appropriate working spaces for the whole class and experiments involving acids and other liquids have been carried out in laboratories with limited water and sink provision. It is important to ensure that science is taught in an environment that is motivating for pupils and enables them to have a positive learning experience of modern science. The new funding available to support Technology College status should provide a stronger platform for the development of science. The school library is a good resource, which is well used by the department. The librarian has given good support by compiling resource packs for science topics, and ensuring that the library science stock reflects the needs of the department.

134. The department is well managed, and the new head of department has begun to make an impact on the learning outcomes for pupils. There is work to do on ensuring that departmental policies are consistently applied.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- Very good use is made of ICT to help pupils in the development of their work.
- Standards in drawing and painting from direct observation are good.
- The imaginative aspects of art are good, particularly the links with the art of other cultures.

Areas for improvement

- There is a need to provide a wider range of three-dimensional work.
- More computers are needed in the classrooms.
- Increase the profile of art within the school by exhibiting some of the very good work in pupils' folders.
- Consider introducing work in clay.

135. There has been a gradual improvement in the GCSE results over the past three years. Standards, however, are still below the national average with regard to the higher grades of A* to C. They are a little above the national average with regard to all grades.

136. In work seen during the inspection the standards that pupils reach by the end of Year 9 are broadly average and they are achieving well. In Year 9 pupils are able to use information and communications technology (ICT) in the development of their own work. Following the guidance of the teacher they can scan in their own drawings of the human figure to the computer. They can locate these drawings later and change the images with regard to colour and shape. This enables them to change and develop their work in a much greater range of ways than they could otherwise envisage. In other groups pupils in Year 9 develop their human figure drawings in imaginative ways using a range of patterns inspired by African, Indian and Aboriginal art. They can scale this work up and create an original abstract design from a unit of their original drawing. Pupils in Year 8 learn a range of simple methods of printing that they can use later in their collages on landscape. However, in one instance they do not have the composure to concentrate and experiment with their findings and so build on the prints they have created. They learn some of the basic skills of drawing and painting, including a formal study of the colour wheel.

137. In work seen during the inspection the standards that pupils attain at the end of Year 11 are at the level expected of pupils nationally. Approximately one half of pupils are above this level on specific aspects of the course such as drawing and painting from direct observation. They can observe closely and draw large scale with confidence. Their observation skills to produce paintings are good. Some paintings of fruit and vegetables are particularly good, with strong use of colour and very good shading to achieve three-dimensional effects. The ability to achieve luminous and other effects of texture is impressive in many pupils' work.

138. A significant factor affecting these pupils' ability to reach the higher grades in the GCSE examination is that one third of the marks are awarded to the section requiring pupils to research critically and link their work to that of other artists and art movements. This relies heavily on pupils' literacy skills. To get the C grade pupils have to undertake critical research and make considered connections, assessing images and artefacts. They have to distinguish between changing styles and traditions using an appropriate vocabulary and to justify their opinions and preferences. There is a significant difference between pupils' practical work and their notes, comments and extended writing. Practical work is much better than the written comments and explanations. This requirement for writing lowers the grades of pupils who have otherwise good standards in their practical artwork. Also the language used in art books and in art on the Internet is almost always sophisticated. This restricts the knowledge and understanding of many pupils who have English as an additional language or special educational needs in literacy.
139. Information and communications technology is well used in GCSE studies. Standards in Year 10 are above average in this aspect of their work. Pupils working on the project "Change" can scan in images and manipulate and change the shapes and colours to get imaginative developments. They can use these for inspiration in further work. The very good work in information and communications technology has potential to raise standards further. However, the use of computers is restricted to times when the computer room can be booked, computers need updating as they operate slowly and the colour printer is not in operation. This limits pupils' learning.
140. Overall, pupils make good progress in art. Apart from the aspects that require research and writing, pupils with English as an additional language and pupils with special educational needs make good progress. All these pupils get individual support and are helped by the visual illustrations and the teachers' demonstrations. Gifted and talented pupils make good progress through extended provision, including special lessons after school. They get good guidance on research and are given opportunities for independent learning.
141. Pupils' literacy is well supported. They are helped to extend their vocabulary and to study art history in a formal way. Pupils in Year 8 are given a special art and design booklet. This is clearly and simply written and is well illustrated and gives pupils a good basis for the study of art through the ages. Pupils in Year 9 have a very good series of fact sheets provided for homework. These are linked to ongoing work in lessons and enable pupils to learn aspects of art from a range of styles and eras.
142. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and often very good. This is similar to the situation at the time of the previous inspection. There are two specialist teachers who have very good knowledge and understanding of the subject. This knowledge is used to good effect in giving pupils an understanding of the artistic possibilities of the themes they study in each year group. The teachers work hard to make lessons interesting for their pupils. There is good use of slides to show pupils details of other artists' drawings and paintings. These enable pupils to learn about artistic techniques. They also enable them to look at how art is used to transmit symbolic aspects of art as in Blake's painting of the mathematician Newton. The teachers maintain a good climate for work and learning within lessons. Pupils are given good opportunities for independent learning in homework, particularly in Year 9 and in GCSE.
143. Assessment is very good. It is ongoing in all lessons. Pupils' work is assessed and marked at stages throughout each project. This indicates the levels reached in the specific aspects of art. All pupils in Year 11 know their mock examination grade and have targets for improvement. They are aware of what has to be improved to reach a higher grade.
144. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by studying these aspects in the work of artists from a wide range of cultures including classical, modern, Pop Art, African and Indian traditions.
145. In general pupils have good attitudes to this subject. They show respect for the subject and for their teachers. They listen attentively and ask questions appropriately to extend their learning. In

general they work at a good pace but in Years 8 and 9 some pupils are too relaxed and could work harder.

146. Management of the subject is good. Documentation and schemes of work have been fully updated and are very good in terms of detail. There is a good range of visits to art galleries and museums. These are linked to pupils' work in school. This provision helps to raise pupils' general knowledge and understanding of art and also gives inspiration for their own work. The school has been chosen with a few others to pilot an "Arts Reasoning and Thinking Skills" project that is raising pupils' ability to think critically. The school is also working with the Tate Modern as part of its Schools Partnership Scheme. There is a specific photo-imaging course run after school for pupils in Year 8. Three pupils have recently won awards for their work in a competition, including the first prize. There is very good support for the postgraduate teacher in training.
147. All the good features reported in the previous inspection are maintained and the few shortcomings have been rectified.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in design and technology is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject and planning of lessons.
- Teachers' commitment to and enthusiasm for the subject.
- The help given to pupils in practical lessons and the management of pupils.
- The range of learning opportunities provided.

Areas for improvement

- The attainment of pupils, particularly in resistant materials and graphic products areas.
- The appointment and retention of specialist teachers.
- The resources for teaching control.
- Technician support in the resistant materials and graphic products workrooms.

148. Standards on entry to the school are below the national average. By the time pupils reach the end of Year 9 standards remain below average with fewer than six out of ten pupils reaching the expected standard. Girls perform significantly better, in line with the national trend. This represents satisfactory achievement. At the end of Year 11 overall standards remain below the national average with just over four out of ten pupils obtaining the higher A* - C grades in the GCSE examinations. The proportion of pupils passing the examinations with A* - G grades is closer to the national average. Pupils do better in the food technology examinations where the proportion of pupils obtaining the higher grades is in line with the national average. Standards have been fairly constant over the past three years with the exception of those in textile technology where standards were lower last year than in the previous two years. The majority of girls take food technology and textile technology and overall do well in these aspects of the subject. The majority of boys take resistant materials and graphic products but do best in food technology. Overall this represents satisfactory achievement.
149. Standards reached by pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) and those with special educational needs (SEN) are variable. They are integrated well in lessons. All the permanent teachers readily identify them in lessons and give satisfactory and extra help when required. Effective learning assistants are present in some textile and food technology lessons; they and the departmental technician help some pupils to make good progress.
150. The standard of learning in Years 8 and 9 is satisfactory. Pupils learn to design and make using a good range of wood, metal, plastic, food and textile materials. They also learn simple mechanisms, structures and electronics well. Because of a lack of suitable equipment pupils are unable to learn the basics of control. Pupils learn by undertaking a good range of assignments in which they are given a design brief, research topic, produce a number of designs, select the best

designs, make products and evaluate their work. Key words are emphasised in lessons and most of the English in the written work is corrected. Pupils have opportunities to listen to teachers' explanations and to write simple texts in their design and make folders. Pupils routinely use dimensions and quantities in their work but have limited opportunities to use information and communication technology (ICT). There are missed opportunities in Years 8 and 9 to improve the presentation of pupils' work using ICT. Most design work is done by providing freehand sketches. In a good lesson in Year 8 pupils were observed learning basic health and safety rules and identifying potential hazards in a food lesson. The work seen from Year 8 was satisfactory and included work on a mechanical picture, airline meals and a fabric pencil case. Some of the products produced were accurate and had a satisfactory finish. All the mechanisms in the mechanical picture worked satisfactorily. In two lessons in Year 9 pupils were seen satisfactorily designing and making pencil cases, pyjama cases and other holders in textile materials. Pupils were learning to produce stencils and use dies to reproduce designs on to their material. Two pupils were embroidering their design using a computer-controlled embroidering machine.

151. The standard of learning in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory. All pupils continue to learn satisfactorily in courses based on their chosen material - resistant, textile or food materials - or in graphic products. They learn to undertake extended coursework firmly based on the design and make cycle. During the inspection a satisfactory lesson in Year 10 was observed in which pupils were learning to make cold desserts. Each pupil was making a different and interesting dessert as part of a group assignment on "cold comfort". In a good graphic products lesson in the same year pupils were observed learning to produce a three-dimensional image of a cube with holes and lugs using computer-aided design. Some completed the task during the lesson and were able to rotate the cube on the computer screen at the end of the lesson. In a generally unsatisfactory graphic products lesson in Year 11 pupils were seen working on their major piece of coursework, a jigsaw puzzle or three-dimensional card model based on a London tourist theme. Pupils were underachieving in this lesson and were capable of undertaking work with a much greater technical content. In a good resistant materials lesson in the same year pupils were seen satisfactorily completing their major piece of coursework based on storage units. Pupils were making different bathroom cabinets, jewellery boxes and CD holders using wood and plastic sheets. One CD holder based on a very imaginative guitar-shaped design was made with good precision and finish.
152. The quality of teaching is satisfactory at both key stages. All teachers have a secure knowledge of their area of work and plan lessons well. They are all very committed and enthusiastic to improve teaching in their respective areas. The teaching of basic skills is good. The permanent teachers give good help and advice to all pupils in the practical lessons but some of the supply teachers are unable to identify pupils with SEN or those with EAL in lessons. In the best lessons teachers give good explanations of the work to be done, use question and answer sessions well, manage pupils effectively and use good course materials. Health and safety issues are routinely emphasised. When teaching is less effective the pace of lessons is slow and the work done lacks challenge. Pupils' attitude to the subject is generally satisfactory and good when the teaching is lively and the topics interesting. Behaviour is also satisfactory.
153. The department is well led by a very experienced and able teacher. It is emerging from a difficult two and one-half year period in which there have been nine changes of staff. The school has found it difficult to recruit and retain good teachers in key areas. The head of department and the other long-serving teacher have done well to maintain the work of the department at a satisfactory level over this period. The work of the department would be enhanced by the provision of a full-time technician in the resistant materials and graphic product areas and equipment to enable control to be taught. The school, along with the neighbouring Park High School, has been awarded Technology College status, a good achievement. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection and pupils continue to make satisfactory progress. Pupils' standards of achievement are below the national average and remain an area that needs improvement. The quality of teaching remains satisfactory or better. Overall, improvements since the last inspection are satisfactory, particularly in view of the many changes in teachers that have occurred over the recent past.

DRAMA

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

Strengths

- The quality of teaching in drama lessons in Years 10 and 11.
- The cross-curricular work with the music department, and, to a lesser extent, with the art and English departments.
- The extra-curricular work in drama.

Areas for improvement

- The lack of specialist teachers of drama has an adverse impact on the quality of teaching and learning in the department.
- The attitudes and behaviour of a limited number of pupils in Year 8 drama lessons are sometimes unsatisfactory.

154. Drama is taught to all pupils in Years 8 and 9 and is a popular option in Years 10 and 11. The inspection evidence indicates that the attainment of pupils by the end of Year 9 is below national expectations and achievement is satisfactory. A number of pupils studying drama at this age have special educational needs or speak English as an additional language. In the best lessons seen pupils in Year 9 can act in group work, recognise key words linked to drama and can talk about others' performances, making use of 'flashback', 'freeze-framing' and radio scriptwriting techniques. They can take part in warm-up activities such as the caterpillar game in order to experience what it feels like to be left out, talk about their experiences and devise an improvisation on a related topic. The level of talking among some lower ability pupils in Year 8 impedes their progress and means that they are unable to co-operate effectively in group work.
155. The inspection evidence indicates that by the end of Year 11 the attainment of pupils is in line with national expectations and achievement is good. Pupils are able to 'freeze-frame', to stay in role, to use mime techniques to 'mark the moment', and to evaluate their own and others' work. They can talk about performances they have seen, comparing differences in the school's performance of 'Grease' and a professional production of 'Blood Brothers', and they are beginning to develop an understanding of symbolism in drama. There is no evidence of significant difference in the standards attained by either gender or different ethnic backgrounds.
156. Behaviour is satisfactory in almost all drama lessons. In Years 8 and 9 most pupils, including those with special educational needs, co-operate with each other and take part fully in all activities, for example in devising an improvisation based on the issue of conflict between parents and children. In a minority of cases, the behaviour of some Year 8 pupils impedes their learning. Year 11 pupils are focused on their preparation for GCSE Drama and their behaviour reflects their commitment to the subject.
157. Learning is satisfactory in Years 8 and 9 and good in Years 10 and 11 and the quality of teaching reflects those grades. The quality of teaching in drama lessons in Years 10 and 11 enables pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, to make good progress. Pupils enter school with a relatively low level of attainment in Year 8. GCSE results are in line with national expectations. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of their subject but the lack of specialist teachers has an effect on the quality of teaching and learning in the department. Teachers plan their lessons effectively, have appropriate expectations of pupils and use a variety of methods, including warm-up activities, effectively. They manage pupils well and make good use of time, support staff and resources. Teachers use assessment effectively by making detailed and ongoing assessment to provide for pupils' development, particularly in terms of the GCSE criteria for drama. Homework is used to reinforce learning in all years. Pupils in Years 8 and 9 gain the skills to take part in group work and pupils in Years 10 and 11 explore the skills required for GCSE Drama. The quality of teaching in Year 11 means that Year 11 pupils are able to experiment creatively when devising a video cover for their work. However, less effective teaching in Year 8 means that pupils rely on higher

ability pupils to produce most of the written work for a group-devised performance based on the poem 'Matilda'. For the same reason other Year 8 pupils are not clear about the objectives of the teaching in a lesson linking drama to thinking skills. In one Year 9 class the teaching is more effective than the learning because, although the teaching is focused on appropriate learning objectives, the effort and concentration of the pupils is not sufficient for them to benefit fully from the teaching. However, pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language make particularly good progress in all years and this is a strength of the department.

158. The quality and range of learning opportunities is satisfactory in Years 8 and 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. There is clear evidence of good literacy skills in the department; pupils understand the use of dramatic terminology such as 'narrator' and 'dramatic tension' and key words linked to drama are on display in the main drama room. There are good opportunities to take part in extra-curricular activities, for example to co-operate with the staging of a performance with a visiting theatre company, the Tara Arts Theatre, and in seeing performances for GCSE Drama such as 'Blood Brothers'. There are effective links with the music department, where pupils co-operate in projects on 'Hallowe'en' and 'Guernica', and with the English department, when pupils study a Shakespeare text in Year 9. There are a number of opportunities for pupils to consider spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues in lessons. Examples seen included a Year 9 lesson involving issues related to refugees in which pupils who speak English as an additional language were able to incorporate their experiences into a lesson about the experiences of refugees. In a Year 11 lesson pupils expressed 'dramatic tension' in mime with the aid of appropriate 'mood music'. The maintaining of performance in drama is good and the department has good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progression. Assessment information is used to guide curricular planning.
159. Leadership and management in the subject are good. The head of department is experienced and is updating schemes of work for drama to include personal, social and health education and citizenship. Procedures for monitoring and evaluating the performance of drama are good and resources for drama are used systematically. Provision is enhanced by the good accommodation, with two specialist drama rooms and the opportunity to use the hall for performances. Learning resources for drama are good with an appropriate collection of drama texts and specialised lighting in the main drama studio. There is effective use of new technology in the subject at present but there is scope for increased use of ICT in drama lessons. Since the last inspection behaviour in drama lessons in Years 8 and 9 has improved but there is scope for further improvement. Progress in learning in Years 10 and 11 has also improved since the last inspection.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- Teachers plan lessons well.
- Field visits extend learning opportunities.
- Resources are used effectively.

Areas for improvement

- To extend the curricular breadth and balance of the subject particularly at Key Stage 3.
- Extend the use of ICT to support learning and research.
- Marking, so that it is more regular and helpful to pupils.

160. GCSE results are below average, both at the higher grades (A* - C) and across the full range of grades. In 2001, boys obtained higher grades than girls but fewer girls took the subject. After a pronounced dip in examination results, new leadership is starting to raise expectations.

161. In the work seen during the inspection, standards at the end of Year 9 are below national averages. Standards on entry and for pupils joining the school during Years 8 and 9 show that both are experiencing difficulties with written work due to weaknesses in literacy skills and geographical knowledge. However, a small minority of students is working at higher levels. At the time of inspection no Year 9 lessons were available for inspection. Judgements made on that year are therefore, of necessity, based on a scrutiny of work. Pupils of all abilities demonstrated in their work or lessons an understanding of some of the processes involved in both physical and human geography and their related effects both on the environment and human activity. However, due to pupils' lack of previous knowledge there is a need to review the breadth and balance within the schemes of work. As pupils progress through Years 8 and 9 they show some confidence in finding information from text, maps and diagrams but their skills in using computers are not so well developed. Higher attaining pupils can, when given the opportunity, write well on a given topic but do not have enough opportunities to attempt pieces of extended writing. There was little evidence of the use of graphs, a contribution that work in geography can make to numeracy. The subject does not provide a sufficient range of texts and worksheets to address the different levels of ability within groups. The work of girls is at a slightly higher level than that of boys. Pupils with special educational needs make significant progress in working towards the targets in their individual education plans. This is particularly apparent when they receive additional support. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are making some progress but further assistance is required, especially for those just starting to learn English. The use of key words has been introduced in geography and is having some effect.
162. In the work seen during the inspection, pupils were working at about national averages at the end of Year 11. Pupils' achievement relative to standards at the end of Year 9 shows satisfactory improvement. However, this is a very small group. Pupils are making satisfactory progress in their geographical knowledge, understanding and use of geographical skills. The higher attaining pupils understand the vocabulary and can use it in geographical contexts. With more challenging work and suitable texts this could be advanced further. In a lesson on 'Current Problems in Farming' pupils had a clear understanding of the issues involved. Also in the humanities lesson pupils in a discussion had a clear idea of the role played by multi-national companies and the need for fair trade for farmers involved in the growth of cash crops.
163. Pupils' attitudes were generally positive and where they were not this did not affect the learning in lessons. Most pupils came prepared to work and concentrate on the tasks they are given. The majority of pupils respond well to the firm demands placed on them by their teachers. They generally work well together and take responsibility for their work. During the inspection, behaviour was generally good and any minor incidents were quickly dealt with.
164. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in Years 8 and 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. The quality of learning is similar. Lessons are usually well prepared and draw on an appropriate range of activities and resources. However, there are not enough opportunities for the use of computers to support learning. All lessons observed had appropriate aims, often shared with pupils. In many lessons, teachers began with a review of previous work, to assist pupils to recall and build on their learning so that they could progress in their knowledge and understanding. Teachers have a good command of their subject and tasks are mostly matched to the needs of pupils, but more could be expected of more able pupils. Question and answer sessions are well used to check previous work and to ensure that new learning has been clearly understood. When oral assessment is used it greatly enhances pupils' involvement and learning. Marking is regular but more constructive comments on how pupils can make adjustments to their work in the future would be beneficial.
165. Subject management is satisfactory and strengthened by the new leadership. While the accommodation is satisfactory it would benefit the staff and pupils if the rooms formed a suite. Curricular planning needs improvement and the subject needs to be more clearly identified in the school's curriculum so as to develop and reinforce key skills in all years. Geographical visits to the Isle of Arran, Shopping Hierarchies in Harrow, the citizenship project in Wealdstone and the planned visits to the Natural History Museum for displays on volcanoes extend what is learnt in the classroom. The subject area has dealt with some of the key issues mentioned in the last

report. However, there is still insufficient use of computers. Further curriculum planning and monitoring of pupils' work and teaching are needed.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- The good quality of teaching is reflected in the pupils' achievements.
- Specialist teachers have good subject knowledge.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are very good.
- Pupils are positive and enthusiastic about their work.
- Homework is incorporated well into lessons and effectively extends the pupils' learning.
- History schemes of work are closely matched to National Curriculum programmes of study.

Areas for improvement

- The use of computers to support learning is under-developed.
- Pupils' knowledge of the learning experiences offered through history as an option in Years 10 and 11 by clarifying the distinctive nature of the subject in the courses in Years 8 and 9.
- There are insufficient resources to support the curriculum and meet the individual needs of pupils in Years 8 and 9.
- Teachers must emphasise the importance of handwriting and presentation.

166. History is taught through integrated humanities and is also offered as an examination option in Years 10 and 11. Standards of work are satisfactory overall with pupils making good gains in their knowledge and understanding of historical events. By the end of Year 9, the majority of pupils are at or near the national averages for their age. The attainment of higher achieving pupils is above this level, while lower attainment by pupils with special educational needs is mostly linked to weak literacy and language skills. As yet there are no GCSE examination results available to enable comparison with national averages.

167. The pupils' achievement is good overall. However, presentation skills are varied and much work is untidy and hastily written. By the end of Year 9 pupils have completed a range of topics. For example, they have a clear understanding of everyday life under the Tudors and Stuarts, and there are good examples of free expression when they write about eighteenth century child labour or trench warfare during World War 1. By the age of 14 they discuss the advantages and drawbacks of the League of Nations with a confidence based on their prior learning and homework tasks.

168. There is no group studying history in Year 11 and it was not possible to observe the teaching of history in Year 10. However, an analysis of pupils' work indicates they are making at least satisfactory progress towards their examination. For example, in-depth studies into the development of medicine indicate that pupils have a clear understanding of Hippocrates and the symbolism of the Hippocratic oath. They develop note-taking skills and use these to inform their written observations, but their presentational skills are under-developed.

169. The quality of teaching is good overall and this is reflected in the quality of learning. Well-planned and structured lessons are lively and fun, promoting the pupils' genuine enthusiasm. For example, in a re-enactment of the Treaty of Versailles, pupils used their knowledge of world leaders and events to prepare speeches. This very good reinforcement of their learning catered well for all ability levels, particularly in group-work debates on who would present the speeches, what questions might be raised by other 'national delegates'. The teachers' good classroom control and pupil management skills ensure that no time is wasted and maximum learning takes place. Some teachers make good use of graded worksheets to ensure that all pupils can complete the set task. However, in-class support for pupils with English as an additional language is limited, and this impedes their progress. Similarly, provision for less able pupils or higher achieving pupils is inconsistent. This is an issue that the department is dealing with through its development planning. Nevertheless, there are examples of good attention to basic literacy skills, with key vocabulary and regular spelling tests on these.

170. Effectively targeted question and answer sessions at the end of lessons promote the pupils' awareness of their learning, and this is further supported by linked homework tasks. However, the use of computers is limited, and relies on pupils' use of personal resources. The quality of marking is good, with constructive and helpful comments, which indicate that teachers have a good knowledge of pupils' abilities, but reminders to improve handwriting are rare. Teachers keep efficient records, using these to inform future lesson plans, and regular assessment at the end of each topic identifies the pupils' levels against national standards.
171. The recently appointed head of humanities is enthusiastic and hardworking. His monitoring programme has highlighted areas for improvement, which have been built into the departmental development plan. A subject policy, schemes of work and assessment procedures are in place and developing well. However, the department must decide whether it is offering history or humanities to pupils in Years 8 and 9, particularly as both subjects are examination options for older pupils. The history curriculum is closely matched to the National Curriculum programmes of study, and provides a sound foundation for examination work. However, the distinctive nature of the subject is not clearly apparent to pupils within humanities.
172. Staffing levels are satisfactory overall, but there are insufficient classroom assistants to support pupils with weak basic skills. Pupils' work and motivating posters are attractively displayed. Although the quality of available resources is good, they are insufficient to meet the needs of the curriculum. For example, a shortage of textbooks means that Year 8 pupils cannot all follow the same topic simultaneously. There are no simplified texts for less able pupils and no hands-on artefacts to reinforce learning. However, the pupils do visit historical sites and museums.
173. The department has maintained its strengths since the previous inspection, and has now dealt with the issue of structuring the curriculum to meet National Curriculum requirements. Procedures for monitoring and recording pupils' progress have improved, but the absence of computers and their use to support learning continues to be a weakness.

INTEGRATED HUMANITIES AT KEY STAGE 4

Overall, the quality of provision in integrated humanities is **very good**.

Strengths

- GCSE results have remained well above national averages over the last three years.
- There has been a steady upward trend in the percentage of pupils who achieve examination grades in the range A*-C.
- The quality of teaching is good and this is reflected in the pupils' consistently good academic achievements.
- The teachers have a good knowledge of the subject.
- The pupils work hard and show positive enjoyment of the subject.

Areas for improvement

- There is insufficient use of computers to support independent research and study.
- Individual learning needs are not always well catered for.

174. Integrated humanities is taught throughout the school but, in Years 8 and 9, this is in the form of discrete geography and history lessons, which have been reported on separately. With the exception of a very small number who have been disapplied from the curriculum, all Year 11 pupils are entered for GCSE. Their results in terms of the proportion achieving grades in the A*-C range over the last three years are significantly above the national averages.
175. By the end of Year 11 pupils make very good gains in their knowledge and understanding of a range of topics. They deal with sensitive issues such as racism, human rights and women in society in well-considered narratives and essays, which indicate a good degree of personal research and independent study. Within lessons they engage enthusiastically in discussions on

topical issues. For example, they use well-reasoned arguments when debating global inequality and the issues surrounding the uneven distribution of wealth. However, presentation skills are varied, and much work is untidily presented. Within their ability range, the pupils with special educational needs make good progress, as do higher achieving pupils. However, on occasions the latter are sometimes insufficiently challenged, and the lack of computers denies them opportunities to extend their knowledge.

176. Both teaching and learning are good. Teachers are secure in their subject knowledge, and the high quality of teaching together with the very good relationships with pupils ensures that the well-structured lessons are fun as well as informative. Lessons are balanced to include lively debates that allow pupils opportunities to air and compare their views, such as when Year 10 look at the changes in the British Empire over 200 years. They use maps to support their work and make direct links between colonisation and modern trade links with less economically developed countries. The teachers' good question and answer techniques provide realistic challenges, promoting further thought, investigation and research. Homework is a regular expectation and provides a written extension to the lesson that the majority of pupils complete conscientiously. The standard of marking is good, with constructive and helpful comments and teachers keep clear records, which enable them to make examination grade predictions.
177. The recently appointed head of department is enthusiastic and committed to developing the department. Procedures for assessment are in place, and are guided by experience of examination moderation as well as the school's marking policy. Staffing levels and expertise are good, as is the accommodation. Resources are satisfactory, with a good range of appropriate videos, which are used effectively to support specific topics. However, there is no access to computers in the teaching bases and teachers are often unable to reserve the computer suites because they are regularly used by other subject areas.
178. The good standards reported on by the previous inspection team have been maintained. However, the issues surrounding the lack of information and communication technology have not yet been resolved. With the recent staffing changes and appointments within the department, its capacity for improvement is good.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Overall the quality of provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **satisfactory** in Years 8 and 9 and **unsatisfactory** in Years 10 and 11.

Strengths

- Teachers' knowledge of the subject and planning of lessons.
- Teachers' commitment, enthusiasm for the subject and ability to motivate pupils.
- Support given to pupils outside normal school hours.
- Attitude of students and their willingness to work outside normal school hours.

Areas for improvement

- The overall attainment of pupils in Years 10 and 11.
- The learning opportunities for pupils in Years 10 and 11.
- The time allocated for the teaching of the subject.
- The full coverage of the National Curriculum in Years 10 and 11.

179. The overall standards reached by the end of Year 9 are satisfactory. Standards at entry to the school are variable and overall below the national average. There is a significant group of pupils who enter with above average skills but many others have had little computing experience. Just under two-thirds of pupils have English as an additional language (EAL) and one-third has special educational needs (SEN): difficulties which slow pupils' rate of progress in ICT especially in the earlier years. Nevertheless, last year, teachers' assessments showed that well over two-thirds of pupils achieved the expected national standard by the time they reached the end of Year 9, a proportion which has steadily increased over the last three years. Whilst the method of

assessment used by teachers overestimates attainment, the overall achievement is good in Years 8 and 9. Boys and girls achieve equally. The successful course in Years 8 and 9 has now been replaced in Year 8 by the GNVQ, part 1, course, at the Intermediate Level, based on the Thomas Telford scheme of work; a programme of study devised for delivery in Years 10 and 11. This is a bold attempt by the school to cover the National Curriculum requirements for Years 10 and 11 two years early. The results of the first examination are not yet known. The course work seen and a lesson observation made during the inspection showed that many pupils are having problems with the course at this early stage and standards are below the national expectation.

180. The attainment of pupils with special needs is variable but overall it is satisfactory. Pupils with EAL and SEN are integrated well in lessons. The school's satisfactory approach is to require pupils with special needs to work alongside a more able pupil and to provide a learning assistant when extra support is needed. In a Year 8 lesson after school pupils with EAL were seen to have difficulty in writing their work in English. No learning assistant was present. In a Year 9 lesson a pupil with EAL was observed working satisfactorily with another English speaking pupil and in another lesson in the same year four pupils with special needs were observed making satisfactory progress with the help of extra assistance from the teacher.
181. The standards at the end of Year 11 are variable but the majority of pupils do not make satisfactory progress. Overall pupil achievement is unsatisfactory at this stage. Whilst there are no discrete lessons in the subject pupils do undertake worthwhile applications of computing in other subjects. Groups of pupils are entered for examinations in ICT each year by the ICT co-ordinator without taking a formal course. Last year eighteen pupils from the business studies course, less than one in ten of the cohort, were entered for the GCSE short course examination in ICT; over one in nine of them obtained A* - C grades and all passed. This was a very good achievement for this group of pupils. Earlier this year, twenty-three pupils, about one in six of the cohort, took the Key Skills examination at Level 2. The results of this examination are not yet known but teachers predict that they will be good. The coursework associated with this examination has been done outside normal school hours with the aid of extra help from teachers. The work seen during the inspection - on rates of chemical reaction and foot and mouth disease - was satisfactory and sometimes good. In addition, pupils make progress in applying computing in art, design and technology, mathematics, music, science and learning development lessons. The standard of attainment in these lessons varied but can be good and sometimes very good.
182. The quality of learning in Year 9 is good. In both Year 8 and 9 pupils learn a good range of ICT skills including the use of word processing, graphics, desktop publishing, spreadsheets, databases, the internet and web page design. In a Year 8 lesson pupils with EAL were seen to be having difficulties with the exercise on the fictitious company "Sweet Charity" in which they devised an agenda and minutes for a recorded meeting of charity workers. The course work seen from this year showed that pupils achieved variable standards in their spreadsheet work based on sales data from the school's tuck shop and word processing work associated with a fund raising event. The time allocated for the course is insufficient and all pupils are taking additional lessons outside normal school hours in order to complete their work in time. In two good Year 9 lessons pupils were seen developing slides using PowerPoint to illustrate a talk on the benefits and drawbacks of the Euro based on information they had gathered on the internet.
183. Overall the quality of learning in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory even though the application of computing in some other subjects is generally good. In a very good Year 10 lesson in art pupils were observed learning to use CorelDraw to manipulate digital images. The pupils could obtain images, rotate them and change them very effectively. In a less successful lesson in science pupils were seen recording and analysing radiation levels in an experiment using a heated cube with different coloured surfaces. In a good Year 10 lesson in design and technology pupils were seen learning to use ProDesktop to create three-dimensional images of a cube with holes and round lugs. Many pupils undertook this task well and could cause their three-dimensional image to rotate on the computer screen by the end of the lesson. In a good Year 11 lesson in science pupils were observed using a computer to log and analyse the data on temperature, light level and oxygen level in a fish tank. The data gathered over the previous twenty-four hours was analysed effectively in the lesson for trends and interrelationships. In a very good science lesson in Year 11 pupils were seen obtaining information on the Internet on changes in population. Other interesting

work is being done in mathematics using the Secondary Mathematics Individual Learning Experience (SMILE) tasks and in music using the Cubase software to help record and edit music. These applications have not been mapped against the national requirements in ICT for Years 10 and 11 but coverage is weak in areas such as developing ideas and making things happen and reviewing, modifying and evaluating work as it progresses. The present arrangements in Years 10 and 11 do not meet the statutory requirements in ICT.

184. The overall quality of teaching both in specialist lessons and in lessons where ICT is applied in other subjects is good in both key stages. All teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject and plan lessons well. In the best lessons teachers give good explanations of the work and demonstrate the individual tasks well. In some lessons projectors are used to good effect to provide large images of the computer screen for whole class instruction. Teachers use question and answer sessions and involve boys and girls equally effectively in lessons. They are particularly strong in providing help to individual pupils during practical work. The specialist teachers are always keen to help pupils make progress and provide additional lessons after school on most evenings and supervised open lessons at lunchtime on some days. As a result pupils are keen to make progress, well motivated and well behaved in lessons. All pupils' work is assessed against National Curriculum levels and recorded well. The method used to combine the assessments of each assignment to provide an overall National Curriculum level of attainment at the end of Year 9 needs to be reviewed. The current method overestimates pupils' attainment. The practice of identifying pupils with SEN and EAL in lessons and providing them with the extra help they require needs to be more uniformly exercised. The role of homework is unclear and needs to be clarified.

185. The department is led soundly by an experienced and energetic teacher. She is well supported by two other teachers, one of whom is the headteacher. All share a commitment to improve and develop the subject. The school has recently introduced a modern computer network and the ratio of terminals to pupils is now in line with the national average. Other departments need to be encouraged to use the new network more effectively. Since the last inspection the school has introduced discrete specialist lessons in Years 8 and 9 and the challenge of these lessons has been improved. The applications of computing in other subjects have become more widespread but the full coverage of the national curriculum in ICT in Years 10 and 11 has not yet been achieved. The quality of teaching has improved and the role of the ICT co-ordinator has been clarified. There is more use of the Internet in lessons. However, the strategy for the delivery of the subject and the rationale for the many changes to courses and examinations need clarifying. The overall progress made since the last inspection is satisfactory.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

Strengths

- Quality of teaching.
- Teacher produced resources.
- Relationships.
- Management of behaviour.

Areas for improvement

- Curriculum organisation, especially in Year 8.
- Central system for storing and sharing resources.
- Consistent challenge to higher attainers.

186. There has been substantial improvement in the quality of work in modern languages since the last inspection. This is most clearly seen in the much better quality of teaching, which, overall, is now good, and in Spanish very good. It will, however, take time for this improvement to be fully reflected in pupil attainment.

187. Nonetheless GCSE examination results in the main language of French over the past three years have shown a clear upward trend towards national averages despite a fall in A*-C passes to 31% in 2001. GCSE performance in other languages, Spanish in 1999 and German in 2000, was respectively below and well below national averages. In any comparison with national statistics it should be noted that the department enters a larger percentage of the whole year group, with a disproportionately large number of boys, than is the case nationally.

188. Evidence from scrutiny of pupils' work and lesson observations indicates that current performance in Key Stage 4 is below national averages but overall in line with pupil ability. It is strongest in Spanish where it is on a par with national standards and weakest in German where it is well below.
189. Pupil attainment in modern languages on entry to the school is below national expectations. About 70 per cent of the current Year 8 pupils have begun learning Spanish instead of continuing with French, whilst some of the remainder have half a term each of French and Spanish. Current standards towards the end of Key Stage 3 remain below national averages due to these organisational factors and the high number of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) or with English as an additional language (EAL). This is despite much effective teaching.
190. Taken overall, the progress that pupils make through Years 8 and 9 is satisfactory. The many pupils with SEN, EAL or low attainment progress well. Enjoyable choral repetition work leads to good standards of pronunciation. Imaginative use of visual resources such as flashcards and, in a highly successful Spanish lesson, a glove puppet, enables these pupils to learn new vocabulary and simple structures. There is good liaison with learning support assistants who reinforce the work well. Foreign language assistants, however, are not as well used in class. Carefully planned worksheets and skilfully graded oral questions help average and high attainers to make satisfactory progress. Too few opportunities are provided, however, for high attainers to speak and write at length, particularly as pupils of similar ability within a class are seldom organised to work together. Pupils consolidate their oral knowledge effectively often through reading cue cards. There is, however, little classroom display of key everyday phrases in the foreign language to reinforce oral and reading standards.
191. Many pupils have low literacy standards on entry. Standards of handwriting and presentation are weak and improve only slowly. There are good examples of teacher comment on written work, which help pupils understand how they can improve their standards.
192. There is currently a very wide ability range in all classes in Years 10 and 11 and a large number of pupils with SEN. Where this is combined with substantial EAL needs, overall standards suffer. This is despite the best efforts of competent and inventive teachers to respond to these highly complex and diverse linguistic needs.
193. In some classes the situation is made even more difficult by the presence of a small number of disaffected boys. Nonetheless there is evidence of good progress made by some SEN and low attaining pupils. They can cope well with many of the GCSE foundation level tasks in reading but speaking standards are low. Only a few higher attainers have the confidence and range of language to go beyond a simple conversation. Average and higher attainers gradually extend their knowledge of tenses and begin to use these in their speaking and writing. There are individual pupils who, by Year 11 and especially in Spanish, are producing good quality course work for their ability. In some instances this includes the accurate use of more complex language worthy of the highest GCSE grades. Standards overall are highest in Spanish where they match national expectations, and weakest in German where they are well below.
194. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good and at Key Stage 3 often very good. SEN pupils respond well to the encouragement they receive. Many EAL pupils are highly self-motivated. There are numerous examples of pupils working co-operatively and of abler pupils helping others to cope. Relationships between pupils and teachers and amongst pupils themselves are very good. Pupils listen carefully to cassettes. They apply themselves well even when work is demanding, and sustain high levels of concentration to the end of lessons and of the school day. When misbehaviour occurs, teachers deal with it fairly and pupils recognise this by their response.
195. It is extremely demanding to teach modern languages in the context of such diverse needs, and the school is fortunate to have a team of such highly motivated and committed teachers, all appointed since the last inspection. They cope very well. They are excellent role models. The quality of teaching is good and this is reflected in the learning. Lesson plans are thorough and often of very high quality. They give careful thought to the ways in which the needs of different

pupils can best be met and often create material to supplement that of the textbooks. For example, at the end of a Key Stage 3 lesson on favourite places in a town, an extended reading text written in French by the teacher gave pupils the chance to apply their knowledge. In a Key Stage 4 lesson the teacher had translated an evening's TV viewing into Spanish as a motivating way of testing pupils' reading skills. However, teachers do not consistently challenge high attainers to demonstrate orally how much they have learnt. Most lessons have a lively pace and a rich variety of activity, including video and the purposeful use of language games, which pupils enjoy. Where teaching was weak, there was slow pace and more difficult work was set before easier work.

196. Despite relatively little use of ICT the current curriculum offers a good range of learning opportunities, enhanced since last year by visits abroad. Leadership and management are satisfactory, although certain aspects are weak. The departmental handbook provides a sound framework for the department's work, and a clear strategy for the further improvement of GCSE attainment has been produced. There is, however, no clarity over language provision in Year 8 and there is no central system for filing and sharing the many resources that teachers create. The current members of staff have the potential, given a supportive context and effective leadership, to build significantly upon the improvement already made.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- The quality of teaching and of learning.
- High expectations, planning and management of pupils.
- Assessment and monitoring of pupils' work.

Areas for improvement

- Opportunities for group work to be developed.
- Computer provision to allow more pupils to fulfil the ICT requirement.

197. The 2001 teacher assessments of pupils' attainment at the age of 14 are below average but evidence from lessons observed and scrutiny of work shows that standards are now in line with the national expectations. GCSE music results had been well above average in 1999 and 2000 but took a sudden drop to below average in 2001. This was due to some pupils not completing course work and some non-attendance of the examination. The gender balance on the GCSE course is about equal; boys do better than girls. All groups, including pupils of ethnic minority heritage, those with English as an additional language and pupils with special educational needs, achieve well in music.

198. The work seen during the inspection showed that by the time pupils are 14 standards are average and this represents good achievement with progress being made by all groups and abilities. Although good co-operation is being developed with music staff in the feeder schools, many pupils still have under-developed musical skills on entry to Year 8. In the work observed all pupils have equal opportunity to develop their musical skills. The attainment of pupils aged 16 is above average and their good achievement is due to confident teaching and high expectations that pupils can do well in music.

199. A strong feature of the department is the inclusive nature of the teaching that takes place. All groups including pupils of minority ethnic heritage make good progress over time because of well-planned lessons and careful explanation and reinforcement of musical conventions. This is borne out by the high grades being predicted for the present Year 11 group and supported by inspection evidence. Two pupils with special educational needs have been predicted to get grade B passes at GCSE and this shows the added value given by the teacher's enlightened musical approach to the subject. This represents a great improvement since the last inspection.

200. The quality of teaching and learning is good in three out of four lessons in Years 8 and 9 with the balance being satisfactory. All programmes of study are there and the teacher's wide subject knowledge has a good influence on pupils' musical thinking, attitudes and skills. Group work, however, is very much restricted because of the lack of practice rooms. Listening skills are well developed because the teacher includes a wide selection of interesting musical extracts ranging from songs by Bob Marley to compositions by Mussorgsky. Such music features prominently in lessons and helps to develop pupils' critical and attentive listening. In one Year 8 class working on musical structure the teacher's wise choice of musical extracts from Pictures at an Exhibition stimulated the class to talk with understanding about tempo, instrumentation and contrasting moods as an effective lead into their group improvisations using binary form. Much counting of beats and concentration was evident as gifted and talented pupils helped others in their group to improve their playing. Another class following the recently piloted Wigan approach to musical awareness using thinking skills and powers of reasoning was less successful because of some off-task behaviour requiring much teacher intervention. Although in its early stages, this mental reasoning approach to musical conventions was quickly understood by many in the class and emphasised the forward-looking approach to musical development taken by the teacher. Year 9 pupils learn about musical conventions, they compose, improvise and sing using a wide range of musical styles. Girls confidently sing Jamaican chants and boys show no self-consciousness when they sing the chicken song even though many have changing voices. Short warm-up exercises would help breath control and improve pitch and tone-colouring. Because of the teacher's very good subject knowledge pupils discuss freely the background to protest songs and racism. They analyse Bob Marley's musical setting of a speech by Haile Selassie as a basis for their own reggae compositions. In another Year 9 lesson pupils develop their reggae compositions on keyboards and take turns to use the department's six PCs that have the Cubase 5 Software package installed. In most lessons work is performed to the class and pupil appraisal is used to underpin learning by positive criticism of what has been heard. Many average and higher attaining pupils give effective performances showing that concentration and co-operation are well established. Lower attaining pupils are less secure although they work with determination to master at least part of the work. Differentiated work is prepared so that all abilities play a meaningful part in the exercise demonstrating the inclusiveness of the music. Pupils generally display positive attitudes and good behaviour, which is due to effective management and the calm approach to teaching taking place. Occasionally lessons do not allow sufficient time at the end for homework and a meaningful summing up with a focus for future work.
201. In Years 10 and 11 the teaching and learning are very good with standards above average because of the teacher's knowledge, encouragement and reinforcement of good working practices. This was seen in a Year 10 lesson where examination criteria were reinforced so that all understood their targets and what they could do to improve on them. Many pupils could explain Ground Bass and Variation Form and they were able to demonstrate that much learning had taken place as they worked on their compositions for the Year 11 graduation ceremony. Compositions in rondo form showed that pupils were capable of extended work due to a thorough grounding in the structure. Year 11 pupils revise the characteristics and vocabulary of Indian music to strengthen their understanding in preparation for the GCSE examination. They listen to Bhangra extracts played on original Indian instruments and improve their learning by comparing and contrasting this with music in a similar style played on electronic instruments. Because of the teacher's detailed background knowledge pupils develop a good understanding of the project and are able to brainstorm ideas to support their revision. Those pupils who are recognised as gifted and talented have taken part in an 'Arts-4-schools' workshop and concert on ensemble skills at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. They also take part in the Harrow Young Musicians' workshops to broaden their musical development.
202. Since the head of department, who is the only music teacher, arrived 18 months ago targets have been set, units of work are regularly assessed and evidence is stored on disc, video and audio cassette for easy retrieval. Pupils have target levels and grades and these are revised after six months in the light of progress made. GCSE grades are predicted and pupils know their grades and are given help and advice on how to improve them. This thorough use of assessment and

careful monitoring of pupils' work has provided the department with an effective tool with which to manage learning.

203. The music and drama departments work closely together and produced a performance of the musical 'Grease' which was very popular and well supported by pupils and parents alike. The department is developing a steel band, samba band and an orchestra. About 100 pupils play instruments and there are regular performances in assemblies and at other school events including an international evening. Joint musical events take place with feeder schools and the head of department has been able to go into the middle schools to do some Year 7 teaching in preparation for the new intake of pupils in September.
204. There is very good leadership and management of the department and this ensures that the subject supports the learning and aspirations of all pupils. The department handbook has all policies carefully laid out and the scheme of work and the development plan are very thorough in focusing on ways of raising standards still further. Assessment, recording and reporting are well planned and well used to monitor pupils' progress. Marking is very effective and includes comments that are informative with ideas for further development. Targets are set and pupils are aware of their levels and grades. Staffing is adequate and formal monitoring has taken place recently. The head of department has attended inset on music ICT and a national conference for gifted and talented pupils as well as courses run by the incorporated society of musicians. Regular policy meetings take place with the head of performing arts, who is also the line manager. The music room has up-to-date displays including key words but there are no practice rooms attached and this inhibits the development of group work. There are six computers used by pupils on a rotational basis and loaded with Cubase 5 Software. ICT plays a big part in musical development and as the number of pupils choosing GCSE music is increasing there is a need for greater provision in this area. The department has a selection of books, music and CDs and the library has recently updated the collection of books on music.
205. Due to the enthusiasm and high expectations of the head of department, music has moved forward since the last inspection and the main areas for improvement noted then have been dealt with.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Teaching and learning are good; teachers plan lessons using a range of activities that allow all groups of pupils to learn well.
- Relationships are good.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- Extra-curricular provision is good.
- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development.

Areas for improvement

- Accommodation is outdated and limits curricular development.
- The allocation of curricular time in Year 10 and Year 11 is insufficient.
- There is no departmental teaching base for GCSE PE theory lessons.
- Only small numbers of girls take the GCSE PE examination.

206. Overall, standards in physical education are in line with the national average at the end of Year 9 and above average at the end of Year 11. GCSE Sports Studies results over the last three years were above the national average, with the exception of 2000, when they were slightly below. Pupils tend to achieve better results in physical education than in most of their other subjects. High attaining pupils, including the gifted, achieve well in a wide range of sports, at inter- school,

borough and sometimes, national levels. A current Year 11 pupil is the reigning English Schools' High Jump Champion and Record Holder.

207. Standards in lessons and work seen in Year 9 matched national expectations and showed good improvement from work in Year 8. Most pupils are achieving well. Progress is good because teachers plan work that is appropriate for all levels of attainment. The good extra-curricular programme allows talented pupils to develop their skills. Most Year 9 pupils use satisfactory individual and team skills in games; they can plan warm-ups and use sound technique in badminton. The highest attaining pupils accurately judge performance and use refined skills and tactics to beat opponents. The standards of a significant minority are below average. They often show satisfactory individual skills in isolated practice, but cannot use them effectively under game pressure; below-average hand-eye co-ordination hinders their progress in racket sports.
208. Standards of work of Year 11 pupils are above nationally expected levels. Pupils achieve well in response to good teaching. They consolidate previously learnt skills and achieve higher standards than expected, particularly when taking into account the limitations imposed by unsatisfactory accommodation. Higher attaining pupils demonstrate good understanding of attacking and defensive strategies; they analyse and correct technique and show good ICT skills in GCSE theory work. These pupils perform well in extra-curricular sport. Most pupils can plan and judge performance accurately. Their spatial awareness, skill levels and knowledge of tactics allow them to participate effectively in game situations. The standards of a small minority are below average. They understand basic technique and rules, but lack spatial and tactical awareness. Most pupils' numerical skills are satisfactory; they confidently use scoring systems and can measure performance. Listening skills are generally good and pupils willingly participate in oral work. Overall, pupils' information and communication technology skills are satisfactory. GCSE PE pupils in Years 10 and 11 show more advanced skills. They make effective use of video recording and analysis to improve performance and use the Internet to research information. Listening skills are generally good and pupils willingly participate in oral work. No significant differences were observed in the standards achieved by pupils of different gender or ethnic background. Pupils with special educational needs, those with English as an additional language and those who are talented, make good progress.
209. Overall, pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They co-operate well with each other, maintain good relationships with their teachers and work at a productive pace. Small numbers underachieve because of poor concentration.
210. The quality of teaching and learning is good in all years. Very good management of pupils creates a purposeful and safe learning environment. Challenging teaching and schemes of work that build on previous learning develop skills and promote good progress across the age-range. The work planned is appropriate for pupils at all levels of attainment. In a Year 9 racket skills lesson, three pupils at an early stage of learning to speak English and lower attaining pupils, progressed beyond expectations, because the teacher simplified instructions, modified tasks, used demonstrations and provided short-handled rackets. The learning of higher attaining pupils, including the talented, is accelerated by extension tasks, grouping and extra-curricular activities. Opportunities are provided in a high proportion of lessons for pupils to learn individually. In a Year 10 netball lesson, pupils planned sport specific warm-up drills, judged others' performance and practised officiating. Their achievement and progress in such tasks are good. Learning was less effective when a small proportion of teaching was more prescriptive and pupils were given fewer opportunities to explore their own ideas.
211. Pupils improve their numerical skills through opportunities to measure and record performance and by using scoring systems. Teachers emphasise key words and are adept in their use of questioning. These strategies improve the technical vocabulary, speaking skills and listening ability of pupils across the attainment levels, including those learning to speak English. The subject provides good opportunities for pupils to develop their information and communication technology skills.

212. Leadership and management are very good. A team of dedicated specialists ably supports the experienced head of department. All major policies are in operation. Systems to monitor, evaluate and improve standards are well established. Assessment procedures are good and data is used well to set realistic targets for pupils. There are good curricular links with partner middle schools to aid the transition from Year 7 to Year 8.
213. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Teachers have good relationships with pupils and this is reflected in pupils' very positive attitudes to physical education.
214. The department has made good progress since the last inspection. The good quality of teaching has improved further and work planned to suit all levels of attainment is now a feature of lessons. Thorough assessment procedures are now in operation; revised schemes of work improve continuity and the GCSE examination is successfully established. The unsatisfactory accommodation imposes significant constraints on what could be achieved and there is a lack of curricular time in Years 10 and 11. The department has no teaching base for the delivery of GCSE theory work. The number of girls taking the GCSE PE examination is low.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

Strengths

- Teaching is always satisfactory and mostly good.
- The management of pupils is very good.
- Pupil achievement in Years 10 and 11: GCSE results are high quality.
- Contribution towards the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is very good.

Areas for improvement

- Systematic and planned monitoring of teaching.
- Greater use of assessment data to guide curriculum planning.
- The setting of detailed targets against which pupil progress can be identified and sharing these with pupils.
- Revision of the curriculum to create greater coherence and progression and to meet the statutory requirement in Years 10 and 11.

215. Attainment in Years 8 to 9 is below expectation for 14 year olds in relation to the Harrow LEA Agreed syllabus. In Years 10 and 11, at GCSE, attainment in examinations is higher than the national expectations for similar schools. In 2001, 74% of pupils attained grades A* - C. This represents year-on-year improvements since the last inspection.
216. In lessons and work seen during the inspection, attainment in Years 8 and 9 is below expected levels. There are some good examples of pupils' developing their knowledge and understanding of religious language, principles and concepts such as multi-faith and multi-cultural issues, rites of passage and ordination. Pupils generally make sense of what they study and can relate it to their experiences of life. In Year 8, pupils developed a good knowledge and understanding of the Jewish/Christian creation story. Through a well-directed question and answer session, they explored the importance of the day of rest. They expressed their views about the rights and wrongs of Sunday shopping. In Year 9, pupils developed attitudes towards miracles through the good use of two powerful video presentations. They understood that miracles are often related to faith and prayer. They were able to provide useful links with everyday experiences. Pupils with special educational needs make appropriate progress. The use of key words, technical language and good discussion work were useful aids to improve speaking and written skills. Overall, learning is good.

217. In lessons and work seen in Years 10 and 11, the overall attainment of pupils cannot be determined because there is no general provision of religious education for all pupils. The curriculum is inadequate to fulfil statutory requirements. In Year 10 GCSE, pupils achieve well, and their attainment is significantly above national expectations. They show a very good understanding of issues such as the importance of pilgrimage. They are good at linking religious principles with life experiences, and can make judgements and develop attitudes in an analytical way. They make good use of research material to explore the importance of Hajj as one of the five pillars of Islam. In Year 11, attainment is also significantly above national expectations. Pupils have developed very good skills in research and have begun to think analytically. They demonstrate a competence in using information to evaluate issues such as the importance of the Qur'an in today's world. They achieve very well and make very good progress.
218. There are no significant differences in the standards achieved by pupils of different gender or ethnic background. Pupils with special educational needs, those with English as an additional language and those who are gifted or talented make good progress.

219. Overall, pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. They behave very well, are generally well motivated and apply themselves to the work. They collaborate very well with each other and work at a productive pace. The relationship between teachers and pupils is good, and teachers support individuals both academically and personally. Pupils' behaviour makes a very good contribution to their achievement and progress.
220. Teaching is always satisfactory and mostly good throughout the school. The teaching is of quality and has a significant impact on pupil achievement. Planning is satisfactory, and this assists pupils to focus on information learnt in previous lessons. Lesson aims are shared with pupils in most cases. Teachers make good use of questioning to consolidate current learning and to review previous work. They use a suitable range of styles that enable pupils to *learn from* as well as *learn about* religion. This assists pupils to maintain their interest and develop understanding of religious principles and concepts. Resources are well used, especially worksheets. These enable pupils with different needs to learn well. Teachers manage pupil behaviour very well and this contributes to a good climate for learning. Extension work and homework are used to good effect in allowing pupils to reflect on the information they have gained in class. Teachers have clear expectations of pupils and challenge them to succeed, and they are effective in contributing to pupil achievement. Assessment of pupils' work is generally satisfactory and helpful comments are made in exercise books. The procedures provide a sound basis for assessing what pupils know and understand. However, assessment does not sufficiently inform the teaching and learning cycle and the planning of new work. The department does not use levels of attainment nor does it set detailed targets against which it can assess pupils' progress. Consequently, pupils are unclear about the standards they are reaching and what they need to do to improve. This is recognised as an area for development.
221. The curriculum in Years 8 and 9 is not balanced and it lacks coherence in terms of the intake at the school. The schemes of work are incomplete. They need to be linked to the fundamental aims of the syllabus designed to assist pupils both to *learn about* and *learn from* religion. Lesson plans are satisfactory and, although rather prescriptive, do provide sufficient flexibility to allow for staff initiative. This enables pupils to have the opportunity to reflect on the information they gain in lessons.
222. Religious education makes a valuable contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils, so providing opportunities for pupils to explore world issues of justice, relationships and personal beliefs. In lessons, the teaching encourages pupils to explore their personal views about religious and moral issues, and work on the major world religions necessitates discussion about the cultures that support them, so preparing pupils for life in a multi-faith and multi-cultural society.
223. Departmental management is in need of further development. The head of the department approaches the task with enthusiasm and commitment. There is excellent support from other departmental staff. Planning is satisfactory. Support and in-service training for all departmental staff is part of departmental planning for the future. This will further enhance pupil attainment. The departmental development plan does address some priorities but needs updating to take account of current issues. This should form a good basis for future action. Documentation is satisfactory. There are regular formal meetings of the department but minutes are not taken. Meetings should form the basis for the discussion of important issues relating to pupil attainment and progress. The monitoring of pupils' work needs to happen on a more regular basis. Furthermore, the monitoring of teaching in the department requires further development in the light of the requirements in the management of performance. Accommodation is satisfactory although there is only one specialist room. This creates duplication of resources. One room did have good displays that celebrated pupil achievement. Curriculum resources are generally good, but some updating is required. Opportunities for private study and research in Years 10 and 11 should further enhance pupil achievement.
224. Since the last inspection, attainment in Years 8 and 9 has not improved. However, by the age of 16, pupils' attainment in the GCSE examinations is well above average in relation to similar schools. There has been a significant improvement in the contribution religious education now

makes to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. However, there has been no attempt to address the issue of religious education for all pupils in Years 10 and 11. As a consequence, improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory overall.