

# INSPECTION REPORT

**WEMBLEY HIGH SCHOOL**

East Lane  
North Wembley

**LEA area** : 304

**Unique Reference Number** : 101550

**Headteacher** : Michael Shew

**Reporting inspector** : Derek Esp  
5008

**Dates of inspection** : 8 - 12 November 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707939

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school :	Comprehensive
Type of control :	County
Age range of pupils :	11 to 18
Gender of pupils :	Mixed
School address :	East Lane North Wembley Middx. HA0 3NT
Telephone number :	0181-904 5066
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Appropriate authority :	Governing body
Name of chair of governors :	Helen Pollendine
Date of previous inspection :	11 – 15 September 1995

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Derek Esp, Rgl	History	Attainment and progress
		Teaching
		Support, guidance and pupils' welfare
		Leadership and management
Cliff Hayes, Lay Inspector		Attitudes, behaviour and personal development
		Attendance
		Partnership with parents and the community
		Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
Sally Twite	English	
Tony Dickens	Mathematics	The curriculum and assessment
Alan Rhodes	Science	
Sue Flockton	Religious Education	Special Educational Needs
		Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
Doug Close	Information Technology	The efficiency of the school
	Sixth form	
	Key Stage 4	
Sally Richardson	Modern Foreign Languages	
Tom Dodd	Design Technology	
Margaret Caistor	Geography	
Jenny Parsons	Art	
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The Registrar, The Office for Standards in Education, Alexandra House, 33 Kingsway, London WC2B 6SE

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## MAIN FINDINGS

### What the school does well

- Attainment in and provision for art
- Provision for students with EAL
- Moral and cultural development of students

### Where the school has weaknesses

- Some teaching in KS3, especially in mathematics, design technology (DT), information technology (IT) and some English lessons
- Provision of IT in KS3 and KS4 and some aspects of SEN policy and practice
- High level of exclusions, some poor behaviour outside classrooms, and punctuality
- Some aspects of management, particularly performance monitoring and planning
- The school is not yet giving value for money
- Spiritual development of students and collective worship

**Weaknesses outweigh strengths. The school does some things well and is giving an acceptable standard of education. The continued effective leadership of the new headteacher and support from the local education authority (LEA) will be required if the school is to improve. The governors' action plan will set out how the weaknesses identified during the inspection are to be tackled. The plan will be sent to all parents or guardians of students at the school.**

### How the school has improved since the last inspection

A new headteacher was appointed in September 1998 and significant improvement has since been made, including the introduction of development planning, changes to the school day, and a sustained drive to improve the quality of teaching and learning. In spite of this recent improvement, there has been insufficient improvement since the previous inspection in 1995. A significant reason for this was a major budget deficit which caused considerable difficulties with staffing and resources. Work on several of the eight key issues remains to be completed. Significant building improvements have been made. Examination results have improved though they remain below national norms. There are fewer exclusions but the number remains very high. Improvement will depend on continued effective work by the headteacher and senior managers and support from the local education authority.

## Standards in subjects

The following table shows standards achieved by 14, 16 and 18 year olds in national tests, General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) and General Certificate of Education Advanced/Advanced Supplementary level (A/AS-level) examinations in 1999:

Performance in:	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools	<b>Key</b> <i>Well above average A</i> <i>Above average B</i> <i>Average C</i> <i>Below average D</i> <i>Well below average E</i>
Key Stage 3	E	B	
GCSE examinations	D	A	
A/AS – levels	E		

The results above should be read in the context of the high proportion of students who enter the school with poor literacy and unsatisfactory numeracy skills. Students' progress is satisfactory in most subjects, including English, mathematics and science. Standards are well below average in KS3 and are below average in KS4. GCSE results in 1999 were approaching national averages in English literature, DT, religious education (RE) and drama. They were above average in geography and history and well above average in art. Recent A-level and GNVQ results have mostly been in line with students' earlier GCSE results, though there have been better results than this in A-level art and history.

## QUALITY OF TEACHING

	Overall quality	Most effective in:	Least effective in:
Years 7-9	Unsatisfactory	Science, history, art	Mathematics, DT, IT, English
Years 10-11	Satisfactory, often good.	English, mathematics, modern foreign languages, RE, geography, art, history	
Sixth form	Satisfactory, often good		
English	Mostly satisfactory		
Mathematics	Unsatisfactory		

Teaching was satisfactory or better in 86% of lessons seen. It was good or better in 46% and very good in 12%; it was unsatisfactory in 14%. Teaching from Y10 upwards was very largely at least satisfactory and often good or very good. In Y7 to Y9 it was too often (22%) unsatisfactory with, compared to national norms, little good or better teaching (28%). Most of the unsatisfactory teaching occurred in Y8 and Y9. Most teachers have sound subject knowledge and manage classes well. Too many have low expectations of students. Teaching styles and organisation of lessons are generally appropriate to the subjects and nature of

lessons being taught.

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



## Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Most students show positive attitudes. Behaviour in lessons is generally satisfactory. It is often good at KS4 and post-16, but sometimes unsatisfactory at KS3, particularly in year 9 (Y9). There is some poor behaviour outside classes. Exclusions are very high.
Attendance	Attendance levels are satisfactory throughout years 7 to 11. Punctuality to school remains unsatisfactory, partly because of transport problems. There is also some lateness to lessons.
Ethos*	The attitude to work of most students is satisfactory, sometimes good. Relationships within the school are generally positive. Governors and the headteacher are committed to raising standards of education. These factors produce a positive climate for improvement.
Leadership and management	The headteacher and senior managers have worked hard and provided effective leadership for improvement in the past twelve months. Significant changes have been made, including a change in the school timetable and restructuring of some rôles and responsibilities. Middle managers now have a clear responsibility to monitor teaching and student progress, but there is variable practice. Curriculum planning and management are variable at faculty level and pastoral management needs further improvement. Governors are supportive. Financial management is sound. A school development plan provides a framework for improvement within the context of available resources.
Curriculum	The curriculum is generally broad and balanced although more time is needed for IT and music in KS3. The KS4 curriculum is limited to GCSE and there is no IT provision or vocational options. A satisfactory range of A-level and GNVQ courses is offered in the sixth form. A tracking system has been introduced which monitors students' effort. It is being extended to include monitoring of attainment and progress. Statutory requirements are generally met but not for IT, IT use in other subjects, plus RE in the sixth form. Assessment and marking are variable.
Pupils with special educational needs	The school has drafted a new policy and guidelines to meet the requirements of the Code of Practice. Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are at an early stage of development. The needs of students with SEN are not yet being met across the curriculum.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	The school makes good provision for students' moral and cultural development. Provision for social development is satisfactory but for spiritual development it is unsatisfactory. The school does not meet statutory requirements for collective worship.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Generally the school has sufficient teachers with appropriate qualifications and experience, but at the time of the inspection was relying on agency staff and non-specialist teachers in some subjects. Arrangements for staff development are generally satisfactory. There is no appraisal system. Accommodation is adequate for the needs of the curriculum. Learning resources are mostly satisfactory but there are shortages in some departments – science, DT, IT, and SEN. The Learning Resource Centre is under-used. Recent expenditure has improved IT resources but there are still several unsatisfactory IT rooms and most departments do not yet have access to appropriate facilities.

\* *Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

Value for money      The socio-economic circumstances and prior attainment of students are below average. Students' progress is satisfactory though results remain below average. The cost per student is high. The large historic budget deficit is now being reduced through co-operative action with the local education authority. Teaching has improved but unsatisfactory teaching remains in some subjects at KS3. The school is improving but is not yet giving satisfactory value for money.

### **The parents' views of the school**

<b>What most parents like about the school</b>	<b>What some parents are not happy about</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They are well informed on students' progress</li> <li>• Their children like school</li> <li>• The school is approachable</li> <li>• They are well informed on what is taught</li> <li>• They are encouraged to play an active part in</li> <li>• Children achieve a good standard of work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low standards of behaviour</li> <li>• Low standard of attainment</li> <li>• Lack of encouragement of student involvement beyond daily lessons</li> </ul>

These parental responses represent only the extremely small sample of parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting and/or returned the questionnaire. Inspectors agreed with all the positive responses except with regard to work standards, where attainment is below national norms, though progress is satisfactory. Some behaviour needs to be improved. The provision of extra-curricular activities is not extensive although there is good provision for after-school classes.

## KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

Improve the quality of teaching: [8, 9, 29-40, 86, 92, 97, 189, 202, 206]

- address unsatisfactory teaching in KS3, particularly in mathematics, DT, IT and some English lessons [30, 32, 115, 132-3, 163, 179]
- develop the monitoring of lessons to bring the level of good teaching in all subjects up to national norms [40, 86, 136...]
- develop effective teacher appraisal to meet statutory requirements [96]
- share and spread best practice within and between subject departments [31-34, 115-6, 121, 132-6...]

Improve support for students with special educational needs:

- implement the new draft policy to meet the requirements of the Code of Practice [89-90]
- develop behaviour targets and clarify responsibilities of SEN and pastoral staff [73]
- develop IEPs and their use [10, 35, 36, 73, 161]
- review the development of support staff [94]
- improve the quality of some teaching support [37]
- ensure that subject teachers share responsibility for meeting the needs of all students [35, 36, 44, 45, 115, 116...]

Enhance the curriculum:

- enable students to reach appropriate standards in information and communication technology (ICT) at KS3 [41, 176, 177, 181, 182, 102]
- meet statutory requirements for IT at KS4 [42, 177, 181]
- meet National curriculum requirements for IT in all subjects and exploit ICT across the curriculum [41, 97, 102, 116, 134, 147, 148, 156 ...]
- consider provision of non-GCSE programmes at KS4 [42]
- consider setting in mathematics and modern foreign languages throughout KS3 [44, 126, 127, 187, 189]
- review the sixth form to improve the flexibility of delivery and the viability of some groups [43, 93, 106, 108, 140 ...]
- improve the spiritual development of students and meet statutory requirements for collective worship and RE in the sixth form [43, 57, 59, 208]

Improve student behaviour and punctuality to school and to lessons: [22-24, 28, 32, 63, 71, 72, 86, 114, 131...]

- review the rôle of the Teaching Support Unit and develop mechanisms for behaviour modification [23, 67, 72, 88, 97]
- increase parental involvement in monitoring of student progress [78-80]
- extend opportunities for students to take responsibility in lessons and in the school [25, 42, 92]

Improve management:

- further improve development planning, particularly at departmental level [86, 87, 135, 137..., 190, 203]
- ensure that all managers monitor and manage the performance of their staff [40, 45, 66, 83, 86, 96, 97]
- review the effectiveness of pastoral management and tutorial involvement in monitoring

- student progress [66, 86]
- ensure satisfactory value for money [106, 107]

In addition to the key issues above there are various less important issues, which should be considered for inclusion in the action plan. These are:

Extension of student tracking [20, 48, 49, 87], high exclusions [23, 63], completion of registers [27], schemes of work [32, 45, 116...], homework [31, 46, 53], extra-curricular provision [47], assessment and recording in IT, music and PE [48], self-assessment [51], target setting [51, 80], use of value added information [52], support option [55], curriculum continuity [56], year council meetings [61], pastoral and curriculum team links [64], student induction [64], health and safety [77], individual counselling [75], professional development [95-97], use of LRC [100], resource shortages [101, 102], ICT facilities [103].

English [112, 115-117], drama [121, 122], mathematics [128, 130, 132-6], science [145, 147, 148], art [156-8], DT [160, 163, 164], geography [165, 167-9], history [173, 175], modern languages [187-190], music [191, 193, 196, 197], PE [202, 203], RE [206, 208, 209].

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Characteristics of the school**

1. Wembley High School is an 11-18 multicultural comprehensive school, set in the relatively affluent Sudbury Ward in Brent, but taking students from a wide catchment area that includes many of the deprived areas of the borough. Current numbers on roll total 923, 120 of them in the sixth form. In the early 1990s all of the secondary schools in the north Brent area gained grant maintained status except Wembley High School. At that time the headteacher and governors wished, on principle to stay with the LEA. This school has not been seen as a first choice for local parents and has not recruited on first choices for several years. The resulting wider catchment area includes Harlesden, Willesden and other areas of high socio-economic deprivation. The percentage of students eligible for free school meals is 36%. Approximately 23% of students are on stages 2-5 of the SEN register. Almost 3% of students have statements of SEN.
2. The percentage of boys in the lower school is 60%. Numbers of boys and girls are even in the upper school. The number of students with English as an additional language (EAL) is over 62%. Of these, 15-20% are fluent in English. The main languages used are Gujurati, Urdu, Somali and Punjabi. The percentages of ethnic groupings are as follows: Indian 30%; Black Caribbean 19%, Black-African 13%, White 13%, Pakistani 8%, Other 11%, Black-other 4%, Bangladeshi 1% and Chinese approximately 1%.
3. Baseline assessment information is available and the 1999 Y7 intake have just been screened using the London Reading Test. There is a significant downward skew compared with norms for the test. 48% of students scored 84, or less indicating that they have a reading age at least two years below their chronological age. About 11% had reading ages at least four years below their chronological age.
4. A very large budget deficit was developed during the mid 1990s. This has been reduced and the budget is stabilised; there is a strategy for further reduction.
5. The school does not have many first preferences and is vulnerable to vacancies in other schools. A few students have moved to other schools in Y8. There is a high level of casual admissions. About a third of current students joined the school after Y8. 30% of current Y11 students were casual admissions.
6. The school's priorities are focused on school improvement. Key aims are to improve teaching to a consistently high quality across the curriculum and to develop a culture of self review, evaluation and improvement throughout the school. External reviews are actively sought and are used to improve practice. The clear aim is to make Wembley High School "a community comprehensive school of excellence". All staff have access to information on students and are encouraged to monitor and support the improvement of student attainment and progress.

## Key Indicators

### Attainment at Key Stage 3<sup>1</sup>

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	85	73	158

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	37	40	31
	Girls	45	26	27
	Total	82	66	58
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	52	42	34
	National	63	62	55
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	20	16	10
	National	23	35	20

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	34	40	31
	Girls	44	28	27
	Total	78	68	58
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	48	43	36
	National	64	64	60
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	20	17	15
	National	(28)	(37)	(29)

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<sup>1</sup>

Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

## Attainment at Key Stage 4<sup>2</sup>

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	60	79	139

GCSE Results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A* to G	1 or more grades A* to G
Number of pupils achieving standard specified	Boys	17	46	51
	Girls	40	66	72
	Total	57	112	123
Percentage achieving standard specified	School	41	81	88
	National	46.3	90.7	95.7

Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and percentage of *such pupils* who achieved all those they studied:

	Number	% Success rate
School	0	
National		(92)

## Attainment in the Sixth Form<sup>3</sup>

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 who were entered for GCE A/AS examinations in the latest reporting year:

Year	Male	Female	Total
1999	5	24	29

Average A/AS points score Per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A-levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	10	13.7	13.3	3.0	0	2
National	(17.2)	(17.8)	(17.5)	(2.7)	(2.9)	(2.9)

Number in final year of approved vocational qualifications and percentage of *such students* who achieved these qualifications:

	Number	% Success Rate
School	50	76
National		(72)

<sup>2</sup> Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

<sup>3</sup> Figures in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

## Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year : 1998/9

		%
Authorised Absence	School	8.6
	National comparative data	(8.1)
Unauthorised Absence	School	1.2
	National comparative data	(1.0)

## Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year : 1998/9

	Number
Fixed period	176
Permanent	17

## Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is :

	%
Very good or better	12
Satisfactory or better	86
Less than satisfactory	14



## **PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

### **EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL**

#### **Attainment and progress**

7. Since the last inspection students have been admitted from a wider catchment area which includes areas of high socio-economic deprivation. There is a wealth of baseline data which shows that a high proportion of students enter the school with poor literacy and unsatisfactory numeracy skills. 48% of current Y7 students have a reading age at least two years below their chronological age; 11% have a reading age four years below their chronological age. Almost 3% of students have statements of SEN, above the national average, and 23% are on stages 2 to 5 of the SEN register. 36% of students are eligible for free school meals. In past years the school has received a number of casual admissions. About a third of students joined the school after Y8. Until recently it has lost some higher attainers to other schools at the end of Y7. A significant downward skew is seen in national cognitive ability tests (CATs), both verbal and non-verbal in 1998. The number of students with EAL is 62%. About a third of these are fluent in English. 60% of the lower school are boys. Numbers of boys and girls are more evenly matched in the upper school. The school is a very mixed multi-cultural community and receives a significant number of asylum seekers each year, some of whom are highly traumatised.

8. The low baseline on entry presents a challenge. Most students make satisfactory progress throughout the school. Overall progress at KS4 has improved since the last inspection. Progress in the sixth form is generally good but occasionally satisfactory. Progress was satisfactory or better in 83% of lessons seen. Progress in KS3 was satisfactory or better in 72% of lessons. The progress students make varies with the quality of teaching. An improvement in the 22% of unsatisfactory teaching in KS3 would improve progress significantly. In KS4 the rate of progress in lessons was better. It was sound or better in 90% of lessons seen and good in almost half of them. Progress was satisfactory or good in almost all sixth form lessons. Girls attain better standards than boys but the gap is not as wide as is the case nationally. Good progress is seen when students see the relevance of their work and are challenged. Although there are examples of good or very good progress for higher attainers, they are often under-challenged and do not progress as rapidly as they should.

9. In English the progress of students in lessons is mainly satisfactory. Progress at KS3 is satisfactory. It is good in KS4. Students taking the A-level course are not yet achieving in line with national norms but are making good progress. In mathematics the overall progress of students in KS3, particularly in Y7 and Y8, is unsatisfactory. Many of the more able students under-achieve due to lack of sufficient challenge whilst less able students spend too long copying drawings and diagrams without getting to the core learning. In some instances they are taught mechanical procedures without developing the underlying concepts. Progress is good at KS4 and satisfactory or good in the sixth form. In science progress is satisfactory over time in KS3. It is nearly always dependent upon the quality of teaching and progress in lessons is satisfactory and sometimes good. Students make much better progress in KS4 than in KS3. The whole-school literacy project has contributed significantly to students' progress in reading, oracy and written work.

10. Progress of students with SEN is variable. In some areas of the curriculum, such as mathematics, science, art, and DT, progress is satisfactory. In KS4 science lessons students with SEN make good progress because of a good balance of theory and application. In English and geography there is satisfactory progress in some lessons but these students make little progress in music. In history most students make steady progress and some make good

progress. For statemented students annual reviews are held and the information is used to inform IEPs. However, in the past these have not been circulated to subject staff and, therefore, have not been used in the context of different subjects. They have been used for individual support lessons and progress in these has been satisfactory.

11. The progress for students with EAL is satisfactory and sometimes good, both in lessons and over time. There has been an increase in the number of students entering the school who are newly arrived in the UK. These students make particularly good progress in the Beginners and Stage 1 groups. The GCSE support option also assists good progress, and many of these students gained a good range of GCSE passes in 1999, including a number of higher grades.

12. Standards should be set in the context of the high proportion of students who enter the school with poor literacy and unsatisfactory numeracy skills. Overall standards of attainment are well below the national average at KS3, below average at KS4, and well below average in the sixth form. In comparison with similar schools, (ie. those with more than 35% of students entitled to free school meals) KS3 results are above average, and GCSE results are well above average. Recent results in statutory assessment at KS3 show attainment to be well below the national average in English, mathematics and science. 1998 GCSE results were below the national average generally but very high for those students obtaining one or more pass grades (A\* to G). The percentage obtaining five or more higher grades (A\* to C) was well above the average for similar schools. The average points score in 1998 was well below the national average for boys but close to the national average for girls. Results in 1999 show improvement. Specific targeting of under-achieving groups, including boys, has helped many students to do better. A-level results are very low currently in comparison with all schools. They are subject to fluctuation because of the relatively small numbers of students each year. Overall, the standard of attainment in lessons was below national norms. It was at or above national norms in 57% of lessons. The standard of attainment observed in classes at KS3 was generally below national norms. Standards were near to national norms at KS4 and show possible scope for further improvements at GCSE. Attainment in sixth form lessons was at or above national norms in over 60% of lessons and below national norms in the rest. Standards vary between subjects. At KS3 they were lowest in DT, IT and music; below average in English, mathematics, science, modern foreign languages, PE, and PSHE. They are in line with national expectations in art, history, geography and RE. In KS4 lessons attainment remains below national norms in DT and music. It also remains below national norms in some lessons in English and modern foreign languages. Standards in most other subjects are in line with national norms and are above them in art and history.

13. Results in statutory testing at KS3 have remained well below national averages. In 1998, for example, the average performance of students in English, mathematics and science was below the national average. The lowest was in mathematics where results fell below the national average by 0.40 levels. A comparison of results for boys and girls in the three-year period 1996-98 shows similar performance levels, except for science where boys' performance was lower than that of girls. SATs results in 1999 remain well below the national average. They were worse in all three core subjects in 1999 and reflect, in part, the impact of a worsening level of reading and numeracy skills on intake during the period since the last inspection. Results in 1999 in English and mathematics were above average in comparison with schools with students from similar backgrounds. Science results were close to the average for such schools.

14. Overall GCSE results in 1998 were below the national average. The proportion of students gaining five or more higher grades was 33% in 1995 and 35.3% in 1998. This rose to 41% in 1999. The proportion achieving five or more pass grades was 75% in 1995 and 85% in

1998. In 1999 this figure was 86%. The average points score per student was 31.1 in 1995 and 32 in 1998. This rose to 33 in 1999. In 1995 the average points score for girls was almost six points higher for girls than boys. In 1998 the gap widened to 13 points. In 1999 there are indications that targeted work in focus groups and extra support lessons are having a positive impact. School analysis of the 1998 GCSE results shows that Asian girls are among the highest achievers and black Caribbean and white boys amongst the lowest.

15. The number of students taking examinations in the sixth form has remained relatively low. There is evidence of good added value for students even though the average A/AS level points score for candidates has remained well below the national average. In 1999 the average points score for students entered for two or more A-levels was 13.3, still well below the national average. Intermediate GNVQ results in 1998 were above the national average.

16. Overall attainment in English is low. Recent KS3 assessments show performance well below the national average, though attainment seen during the inspection shows that, at the end of KS4, students reach and fall below expectations in equal proportions. The range of competence in speaking and listening is wide. Many students have a narrow vocabulary and even some higher attaining students are not good at explaining their work. The use of subject specific terminology is variable but good in drama. Discussion skills are well developed in English and also in science, art and history. There are some good examples of oral presentations to the class in English, geography and history. Listening skills are encouraged in several subjects but not always with success. In KS3 there are many poor readers who need, and are often given, support in meeting the reading demands of the subjects. This is evident in art, DT, geography, history and RE. Standards rise in KS4 as a result of help given earlier and opportunities of practising reading skills. There are some examples of confident and competent research in art and history. Personal reading for pleasure and information is not well developed overall. Standards of writing vary: there is good evaluative writing in art at KS4 but unsatisfactory work in DT; writing ranges from poor to very fluent in geography and RE. In English, history and modern foreign languages students gain facility in a range of styles. Overall, writing which is sound in content is often flawed by errors in spelling, punctuation and by poor presentation.

17. In mathematics, by the end of KS3, standards of attainment are below the national average but in line with similar schools. They are nearer to national norms at KS4. Attainment of current A-level classes is below national expectations. In mathematics the majority of students improve their numeracy skills to some extent through KS3. Many lack the range of mental strategies necessary to enable them to calculate quickly and accurately. Few use estimation routinely to check results, for example, when using a calculator. At KS4 more able students are able to use formula or graphical methods efficiently in a range of problems. There is a need for a more coherent and focused departmental approach to developing numeracy in the context of a whole school policy.

18. Overall standards in science are below national expectations at KS3 and moving towards national expectations at KS4, A-level and GNVQ. Attainment in National Curriculum tests at the end of KS3 in 1999 was well below the national average. In lessons at KS3 students perform in line with expectations. They are able to explain orally new concepts. There are limited opportunities to demonstrate their abilities in experimental and investigative science. There is, therefore, limited progress in some aspects of investigative skills and processes. All abilities work with accuracy and a satisfactory standard of presentation. There is only limited use of IT attainment and skills. In KS4 the overall standard in double science was close to the national averages for GCSE higher grades in 1999. In sixth form lessons students are able to express relevant, coherent explanations and arguments. There is a sufficient standard of accuracy and presentation.

19. The school has built up reliable base data from intake testing and a good range of analytical measures of value added, including good data on gender and ethnic aspects. Use is made of a range of NFER tests, the London Reading Test, MIDYIS, YELLIS and ALIS. Results are analysed through all key stages by whole school, faculty, department, class group and individual student. The school has made considerable efforts in this field. The baseline data has been made available to all staff in the past year. Subject departments are encouraged to use it. The data has also enabled the school to target groups of students in need of specific support effectively. For the past two years the recently promoted deputy headteacher has secured external funding and used the staffing resources of external agencies to develop a tracking system and a number of focus group activities. Under-achieving students have been targeted, mainly in Y10 and Y11 initially, for example some Y10 boys in 1998. Work is continuing with them in Y11. A group of Y10 students and some Y9 boys, particularly the black African and Afro-Caribbean boys, benefit from focus group work in the current year. An LEA officer works weekly with some asylum seekers. There is evidence in the detailed analysis of 1999 GCSE results that many students have achieved higher than their predicted grades at GCSE as a result of focus group participation.

20. The school literacy initiative has already had success. It has yet to be effectively consolidated across all subjects but provides clear guidelines for literacy support. A specific example of well-targeted work in literacy is the *Amigos* project through which Y10 students support those in Y7. These initiatives work well and contribute significantly to current improvements. The headteacher has invited in external specialists, including HMI, and continues to seek external advice and support. The student tracking system is to be further extended from January 2000 when academic attainment and progress will be monitored. Currently attendance, behaviour and effort are tracked.

21. In 1995 standards were said to be: *satisfactory in lessons at KS4 and the sixth form, although they are not so good in some lessons at KS3 as would be expected for pupils' ages and abilities* ..¼ Overall GCSE results are below national average¼.. There has been a continuing decline in the reading and numeracy skills of students on intake year by year as the effect of competition with other schools has been felt. The school has recently initiated a range of measures to monitor and improve performance, targeting help where it is needed. The literacy strategy and focus groups have contributed well to student progress, particularly at KS4. The standards and progress in lessons and external examination results show a real improvement against the increasingly disadvantaged intake trends.

### **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

22. Most students have positive attitudes to learning. Students show interest in their work and most sustain their concentration well. In older year groups (Y10 and above), students' response to the teaching was satisfactory or better in almost all lessons seen. In over half of lessons it was good or better. Students' response in Y7 to Y9 was at least satisfactory in the majority of lessons but, in one lesson in seven, it was less than satisfactory, rising to one lesson in six in Y9. Students show interest in their work and most sustain their concentration well. Their capacity for independent and personal study is not well developed in younger year groups. There was evidence of independent learning in Y11, Y12 and Y13 but this was balanced by the number of classes seen where students were somewhat passive or teacher-dependent. Their attitudes to support, both within the classroom and in individual sessions, are generally positive. Students appreciate the help which they are given, and most make a good effort in their individual lessons, even when they find tasks difficult.

23. Behaviour in the classroom is usually satisfactory or good. Students show respect to teachers and to each other. In the minority of cases where behaviour is less than satisfactory, mostly in Y7, Y8 and, especially, Y9, it is frequently associated with less effective teaching. Around the school, however, behaviour is not always satisfactory. There is considerable pushing and horseplay in corridors, resulting in disorderly movement around the school. This is exacerbated by the narrowness of the corridors. Some students were seen wandering about the school during lesson time. This frequently led to disruption of other lessons. The previous inspection commented upon the lack of adequate supervision and it remains the case that action needs to be taken to ensure students are where they should be at all times. Exclusions, though falling against previous years, are still high and arise often from violent behaviour among students. In the current academic year, the level of exclusions has not fallen. Less than half of parents returning the pre-inspection questionnaire (only 29) said that the school achieves high behaviour standards and inspectors agreed that there are problems, in KS3 and around the school.

24. Students are sometimes friendly but not very polite or courteous. Most respect the teaching staff and each other. Relationships among students are mostly good and the majority of teachers also enjoy good relationships with students, although there was evidence that the students are less respectful towards new or supply teachers. Racial harmony prevails. Students are trusted to handle equipment safely and they do. There is little evidence of graffiti or litter, indicating a respect for school property.

25. Students show a willingness to accept responsibility, for example on reception duty, as mentors or in the library but opportunities to display initiative and take responsibility are limited, in lessons, in whole-school activities or within the local community.

26. The school has made some improvement in reducing the number of exclusions recently, although it is still too high. In other aspects of attitude, behaviour and personal development, the situation today appears similar to that of four years ago.

## **Attendance**

27. Attendance at the school is satisfactory. In 1998/99 the level (90%) was similar to that at the time of the previous inspection and remained at a consistently satisfactory level through the intervening period. This represents a good achievement relative to the socio-economic characteristics of the intake. Current year statistics show an even better performance (92%). Registrations are properly conducted, with consistent treatment of latecomers, but very many registers are not completed legally, being sent to the main office with blank spaces where there should be an indication of presence or absence.

28. Punctuality remains an issue, as it was during the previous inspection. The problem of poor punctuality has been monitored and improved in the recent past. In the 1997/98 academic year lateness to school was substantially reduced from 8455 to 5220. In 1998/99 the figure had dropped to 4863 for the year. This year the closure of an underground station and two bus strikes have adversely affected the figures and there were 1179 late arrivals to school in two months (September and October).

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

### Teaching

29. Teaching was a key issue in the 1995 inspection report. There was unevenness of quality and teaching in some subjects was variable. The headteacher arrived in 1998 and established a priority: *to improve the quality of teaching to a consistently high level across the curriculum*. A team from the Education Standards Unit of the LEA was invited into the school to observe over 60 lessons and make practical suggestions for improvement. The quality of teaching is now better than it was in 1995 in most subjects. 86% of the teaching observed during the inspection was satisfactory or better; 46% was good or better; and 12% was very good. Just under 14% of the lessons seen were unsatisfactory and were delivered by a relatively small number of teachers. There were examples of good teaching in all curriculum areas.

30. Unsatisfactory teaching is mainly in lessons observed in five subjects at KS3: mathematics (46%); DT; IT; to a lesser extent English; and less again in modern foreign languages. Parents had commented on problems in some lessons. It is clear that problems in KS3 are in contrast to generally satisfactory or good teaching in English and mathematics at KS4 and in the sixth form.

31. Most teachers have good subject knowledge and teach their own specialist subject, although there is some teaching outside specialisms. Most teachers have clear expectations of student behaviour. Where lessons are good or very good students' interest is engaged and teacher expectations of academic achievement are high. A key issue in the 1995 inspection report was the need to: *extend the range of learning resources and methods to provide more consistent challenge to students of all abilities in each class and accelerate staff training in practical ways of improving learning for bilingual pupils and those with learning needs*. Particularly in the last year, there has been great effort to improve teaching and develop schemes of work which meet these requirements. Bilingual students benefit from good teaching. IEPs are now being developed but this development is at an early stage. Students who receive in-class support generally benefit from it however. The quantity and quality of homework is variable.

32. Appropriate teaching methods and organisation are used in most classes but curriculum planning is variable. Some schemes of work are well structured but others lack essential detail. Many lessons have clear aims but detailed lesson planning is weaker and lesson timing and objectives are not always clear. Unsatisfactory lessons are often the result of poor planning and timing. Occasionally teachers have inadequate knowledge of curriculum requirements. There are also problems of classroom management and student discipline, often arising from unstimulating teaching but sometimes due to the poor behaviour of a minority of students. The best lessons start crisply with register, homework check, a recap of previous work, and a clear statement of lesson objectives; activities are well structured and the pace of the lesson is good. Students are involved in regular questions and discussion and in the better lessons they are encouraged to develop responsibility for their own learning. Constant checks on individual progress and end of lesson review which consolidates learning are features of good lessons.

33. There are examples of very good practice in several subjects:

*In a Y8 history lesson on the dangers and rewards of travelling around the early*

*Islamic world the teacher engaged the interest of the whole class, sustained a very good pace and vigilantly kept even potentially difficult students on task. Expectations were high and as soon as the individual completed one task successfully they were immediately encouraged to try the next one.*

*In a Y9 art lessons students were organised into groups to create an advertisement and package for a new product. The teacher had good control, used a range of approaches, and engaged all students in group and whole class discussion and evaluation. Activities were timed to sustain a very good pace and team work and problem solving were developed within crystal clear lesson aims.*

*In a Y11 science lesson on balancing chemical equations for salt production students were invited to share findings with the whole class. The teacher gave a clear exposition and breakdown of concepts. There were high expectations with an insistence on accuracy and detail.*

34. Most teachers give effective feedback on their work to students in class. In the best lessons questioning is incisive and challenging. In some subjects differentiated tasks are provided. There is scope to further extend the challenge for higher attaining students. There is evidence that when challenged they produce a good standard of work in essays, projects and other opportunities for independent learning. There are good examples of marking of written work with helpful comments on what needs to be done to improve. In some subjects students have a clear statement in their books of the criteria used for marking of work and effort. More needs to be done to ensure that all teachers provide clear and helpful guidance through marking and other aspects of assessment.

35. In some subjects work has been done to plan for the needs of students with different prior attainment or ability. There is some in-class support for lower attainers, mainly those with statements of SEN. IEPs are being developed and these have to be extended in number and scope to ensure that all subject teachers make an effective contribution to meeting those needs. Many teachers work hard to reinforce literacy in lessons. Students with EAL receive good support.

36. Teaching of students with SEN in different curriculum areas often does not meet the needs of these students. Staff are made aware of students who have SEN but, as yet, the register contains no detail of needs. IEPs for students at stage 2 to 5 of the Code of Practice are now being written, and these have recently been circulated to staff in English, mathematics and science. The lack of IEPs has made it difficult for teachers to plan to meet the specific needs of individual students. Some teachers and departments, such as history and RE, provide differentiated materials for students. In mathematics some account is taken in the provision of resources, and in art there is differentiation by approach as well as provision of support materials. In other subjects such as English, science and music there is some limited differentiation, while there is little planning for these students in geography, PE or modern foreign languages. Subject staff are not always aware of the range of differentiation strategies which they could use to support these students.

37. Additional support for students is provided in different ways. Support staff work with individuals with learning difficulties who are taken out of lessons to focus on specific skills. The teaching seen in these sessions was of a variable quality, ranging from good to unsatisfactory. Some lessons are well planned, to help students to work towards targets in their IEP targets, with a range of appropriate activities and teaching strategies. Other sessions are less well planned, with a lack of clear objectives and with tasks which are insufficiently targeted to the learning needs of the students. SEN staff – both teachers and learning support assistants -

also provide support in classes. The effectiveness of this support is variable. Most support staff have been used to focussing on individual students in lessons. They are now being encouraged to make wider use of their skills by offering support to several students when this is appropriate. This system is at an early stage of development, and neither support staff nor subject staff are yet used to this way of working.

38. Students who are at the early stages of English acquisition are withdrawn from mainstream classes to participate in beginners and Stage 1 groups which focus on developing both oral language and literacy. EAL teachers also run literacy groups for students in Y7 to Y9, which run in parallel to mainstream groups, following the same topics, with adaptations for EAL students where appropriate. Students at the early stages of English acquisition are also offered a Support Option in KS4 to develop English and to give time for support with different subjects. Teaching of these groups is good, with clear understanding by staff of the needs of students who are beginning to learn English, and with lessons planned and delivered to meet these needs. The small number of EAL teachers means that there is little time to provide in class support.

39. EAL teachers provide subject staff with IEPs, to inform them of the needs of the students. They also provide guidelines for supporting these students in the classroom, and offer help with planning to meet their needs. The use which curriculum staff make of this information is variable. Some make good use of the information and provide differentiated work for students, but others appear less aware of the needs and do not target EAL students within the classroom. Good links are being developed with one teacher in each of the mathematics, English and science departments, to support the development of differentiated materials. EAL staff have also provided some INSET for other teachers. Students with EAL generally respond well to the additional help which they receive. They contribute well in the withdrawal groups, and most make a good effort with different subjects. They gain confidence in the withdrawal groups, and offer help to one another.

40. Good progress has been made in the last year with monitoring and improvement of teaching. LEA inspectors and advisors have been used to observe classes and report on teaching, and other external observers and the senior managers have been involved. Heads of faculty have been given explicit responsibility for monitoring standards of teaching and learning and have been supported in this rôle by training and extra non-teaching time. Their effectiveness in monitoring is variable, however, and this needs to be strengthened so that the level of good teaching in all subjects is increased at least to the level of national norms. Shortcomings in teaching at KS3 require urgent remedial attention.

### **The curriculum and assessment**

41. The curriculum is under review and features strongly in the school development plan. A new structure has been put in place this year to bring more flexibility into the timetable. The curriculum in KS3 has breadth and balance and allows all students to study the full range of National Curriculum subjects as well as drama, RE and a personal and citizenship course that includes. A literacy hour has also been introduced for all students. Time allocated to music and to IT is very low at present. Statutory requirements for control and structures in DT and for IT in some subjects are not met.

42. In KS4 all students continue to study the core subjects, DT, PE, RE and *PaCE*. They may also choose English literature, one or two modern languages, one arts subject and either history, geography or a support option. The support option develops core skills and is coupled with extra lessons in the core subjects. The time allocated for GCSE in RE is insufficient. All



courses are accredited through GCSE although a Certificate of Achievement is sometimes available in mathematics. There are no vocational courses on offer at present. There is no provision for IT in KS4 so statutory requirements are not being met. The school should consider the introduction of non-GCSE programmes in this key stage to improve students' motivation and their access to accreditation.

43. A suitable range of courses is offered in the sixth form. A-levels are available in English literature, mathematics, all three sciences, two languages, and several other subjects. GNVQs are offered as two-year courses at advanced level and one-year courses at intermediate and foundation level. Students on one-year courses also have resit classes in GCSE English, mathematics and one other subject although not all students improve their grades sufficiently to gain benefit from these. All students follow a personal development course including careers and spend one afternoon on games but requirements for RE provision in the sixth form are still not being met. Some of the A-level groups are very small and are not be cost-effective. There are very small groups in art, history, economics (Y12), English, graphic products (Y12), physics (Y12), sociology (Y13), and Spanish (Y13). There are some groups where Y12 and Y13 are taught together and this is difficult in IT and business where the schemes of work have not been planned for this. GNVQ courses are popular and group sizes on the one-year courses are often large.

44. Teaching groups are mainly mixed ability in KS3, although there is a mixture of banding and setting from Y9 in mathematics and science. In KS4 banding is extended to English whilst mathematics and science continue with sets aimed at the different entry levels for GCSE. Groupings are mostly satisfactory although groups in technology are too large. The mixed ability arrangements in mathematics and languages, however, are not providing appropriate access to the curriculum for all students and the school should consider introducing grouping by ability earlier in KS3 in these subjects.

45. Since the arrival of the new headteacher a lot of time and effort has been put into the improvement of curriculum planning and schemes of work. Some schemes are now good; for example, in art, history, and modern languages. Others need further development, particularly through the inclusion of strategies and resources for differentiation and assessment. The appointment of link deputies to help drive through curriculum changes at middle management level is beginning to work but there is scope for further improvement in the monitoring of curriculum delivery. The senior management team (SMT) rôle was extended recently to formalise line management responsibility for heads of faculty who in turn have been made responsible for monitoring curriculum delivery in subjects.

46. Homework is mostly being set regularly and used effectively but in some areas, for example in mathematics, there is insufficient differentiation of homework to match individual needs.

47. Teachers in many subjects provide extra lessons after school to give support to focus groups and this is valued by the students. There is also a range of sports and games provision outside school hours but, beyond this, extra-curricular provision is relatively limited.

48. A school policy for assessment, recording and reporting was drafted last year and appropriate statutory assessment is in place in nearly all subjects with the exception of IT, music and PE. Everyday assessments are based upon a common scale for attainment and effort. There are termly attainment assessments at KS3, which are standardised in faculties, based on a test or controlled piece of work. It is difficult to understand why humanities, arts and PE use a different system of grading attainment. Tracking reports have been introduced. These will be updated for effort 5 times a year for Y7 to Y11 and attainment 3 times a year for

KS3.

49. The first tracking cycle has been completed and data is available to inform heads of year and form tutors. The intention is to make it available to Heads of Faculty when attainment grades are reported. This is a sound system, which will allow the experiences and attainments of students to be better analysed. Monitoring procedures are in place to enable all teachers to use it to support the raising of standards. It is intended to extend the tracking of summative assessments to incorporate KS4. This will be a worthwhile development. There is a cycle of annual summative assessment for Y8 to Y13 based on examinations and internal assessment. Parents also receive a detailed annual report.

50. The marking policy is detailed but it is inconsistently applied across the subject areas especially in spelling, punctuation, and grammar. Most students understand the grading systems and a few commented on how helpful they find the improvement targets used by a small number of teachers. At its best marking is accurately graded and contains helpful comments which show how students can improve and sets targets for future improvement. This good practice needs wider dissemination and more attention needs to be paid to monitoring marking.

51. There is little evidence of students being involved in self-assessment or individual target setting, although there is good practice in self-assessment in art. Some faculties are trialling systems but they are in an early stage of development. There is considerable scope for further improvement, which is recognised by the senior management team. Time needs to be set aside for form tutors to work with students to set targets.

52. The school is increasingly making use of statistical data and assessment information for predicting students' performance. All heads of faculty analyse their examination results, but the evaluation of the data and the identification of the reasons for specific trends are not systematically addressed in all areas. Some use of value added information was seen in English, science, DT and modern foreign languages. This work needs to be developed further. In other subjects value added analysis is either absent or at a very early stage of development as yet. Middle managers should use this value added data to monitor trends and plan strategies for improvement.

53. Homework is regularly set but there is no whole-school timetable. The quality and quantity of homework are variable. Much of it provides good extension work for students, but there are examples of very simple completion tasks which do not extend learning.

54. Suitable procedures to ensure consistency of statutory teacher assessment at KS3 are generally in place in faculties. Record keeping is generally satisfactory. Statutory requirements for recording and reporting are met in all subjects except IT, music and PE.

55. Students with SEN have satisfactory access to the curriculum. Some students in KS4 take one fewer GCSE option which should give additional time for individual support with both literacy development and course work. At present, there is a lack of clarity about the identification of students who will take this option and many do not make best use of the time available, as they do not bring work with them to the lessons.

56. Students who need additional help with literacy and other aspects of the curriculum are withdrawn from National Curriculum subjects. The level of individual support required by some students means that their access to the National Curriculum is sometimes affected and there are examples of students who lack continuity in subjects such as science and modern foreign languages. Difficulties are caused for some students who are withdrawn for part of a lesson,

and then have to rejoin their class during a subject lesson. There are no alternatives to GCSE examinations, such as vocational subjects or Certificate of Achievement courses.

## **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

57. The report of the last inspection indicated that spiritual, moral, social and cultural development was central to the aims and ethos of the school. The report commented positively on social, moral and cultural development. A key point for action was to continue to promote the spiritual development of students, through the curriculum and through implementing a daily act of collective worship. Little progress appears to have been made with this.

58. The school works to achieve its stated aim, which is that all members of its community are entitled to be valued equally, and to enjoy respect as individuals from diverse cultures. Linked with this is a desire to foster students' development as independent learners and responsible citizens. In this context, good provision is made for students' moral and cultural development. Provision for social development is satisfactory, while that for spiritual development is unsatisfactory. There is no overall policy for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, although some departments have spent time considering how this can be thought about in different subject areas.

59. There is limited evidence of provision for spiritual development. RE provides students with the opportunity to learn about the values and beliefs of different faiths and an atmosphere of mutual respect is encouraged. Students are able to discuss and consider different beliefs about the existence of God. Work in art shows a belief in creative endeavour. Each year group attends one assembly per week. There is no overall plan for assembly themes. Assemblies seen during the inspection gave some support to spiritual development, dealing with subjects such as Remembrance and Diwali. Other assemblies supported moral and social development, being concerned with issues such as refugees. The school has a determination which means that collective worship does not have to be mainly Christian, but the lack of a daily assembly, plus the content of assemblies and tutor time, mean that the school does not meet statutory requirements for collective worship.

60. Provision for students' moral development is good, following the school's objective that students should develop their own moral values through acquiring an understanding of the relationship between having rights and exercising responsibilities. This is reinforced in the home school agreement, and in students' planners and on the walls of classrooms. Rights and responsibilities are also a focus of aspects of the Personal and Citizenship Education programme (*PaCE*). Staff generally set a good example to students. There are opportunities in a number of subjects to reflect on and discuss moral and ethical issues. In RE students consider the difference between right and wrong, and good and evil. Work on Women and Religion and on Racism help to tackle the issue of prejudice. A module on religion and the environment allows for consideration of responsibility for the environment, and a moral and ethical issues module deals with problems such as abortion and euthanasia. In art students undertake issue-based projects such as one on animal rights. In English moral and social issues are dealt with in the context of literature. In geography there are discussions about issues such as development and exploitation of particular areas of the world including the Amazon Basin.

61. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to the social development of students, who mostly have good relationships with each other and with adults in the school. The *PaCE* course provides the opportunity to consider a range of topics which support social development, and curriculum areas such as PE, DT and RE encourage collaboration and help towards good social development. Students have raised money for both local and national charities. Sixth form students help in the Learning Resource Centre, in classrooms or in the community at local primary schools and the neighbourhood centre. Other students are given

limited opportunities to take responsibility, as register monitors or class book monitors. There is a school council which is attended by two representatives from each year group and year councils are being introduced with two representatives from each form. These do not appear to meet regularly and students do not always receive information about them.

62. Cultural understanding is developed in curriculum areas such as music, art, history and English. Displays around the school provide support for cultural development. There is a range of educational visits to places such as theatres, galleries and museums, but extra-curricular activities are limited. Groups go on trips abroad, relevant to subjects being studied, for example, those studying modern foreign languages have opportunities to visit France and Spain, while students studying art have visited Paris and New York. There is good support for the school's wish to promote understanding of, and respect for, cultural, religious and ethnic differences. Multi-cultural issues are reflected in display in many areas of the school, and in resources and books. Students' own experiences are well used in subjects such as geography and RE. Music, art, English and drama all include references to different cultures.

### **Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**

63. The 1995 inspection report indicated that there were problems of punctuality and behaviour which implied that there was room for improvement. A high level of exclusions remains but is falling. Parents have some concerns about behaviour. Behaviour in lessons seems to have improved along with the quality of teaching. Behaviour around the school and punctuality are still matters of concern. The pastoral structure has recently been changed and strengthened. A student tracking system has been initiated. Focus groups have helped specific groups of students to improve their motivation and academic progress. Positive behaviour management has been developed. There is a school council and year councils are being introduced. Changes in the school day have shortened tutor time which was considered to be insufficiently productive. Responsibility for student academic progress now rests in curriculum faculties. A new *PaCE* programme has begun this academic year.

64. The pastoral structure has been reorganised in the past twelve months. Key stage co-ordinator posts have been removed. The rôle of heads of year has been developed. The head of Y7 stays with that year but other year heads move with their year group. Each member of the senior management team has a pastoral link. Co-ordinators have been appointed for literacy and for *PaCE*. There is also a co-ordinator for careers guidance and work experience. The above changes followed a thorough review of current arrangements and some in-service training was also provided. This is a new structure which has not bedded in fully as yet. There are now separate meetings of the pastoral team and the curriculum team. Notes of meetings are shared but a clearer link is required. Faculties are primarily responsible for academic progress of students. It is important that the many pastoral and guidance aspects are clearly co-ordinated with the academic tracking and monitoring systems. There are regular meetings with the whole pastoral team chaired by a deputy head. Regular year meetings are also held but sometimes tutors are unable to attend because of other duties. Induction of students in Y7 takes place in September. It would be helpful to parents and students if some earlier induction could take place in the summer term.

65. The school draws very effectively on external sources. Every week a member of staff from the LEA Pupil Referral Unit comes into school to undertake specific sessions of behaviour modification. The Windsor Fellowship works with young people in the school and runs programmes to build their self-confidence. Current work is with 27 students in Y10 who have been selected by the school who will have follow-up sessions throughout the academic year. The LEA Refugee Education Officer is in the school regularly and works with Y11 Somali

students. His links are with form tutors and year heads. He works closely with the EAL support team and translates letters for the school when they correspond with refugee families.

Considerable support comes from the Wembley Park project. Since 1997 funds have been made available to develop student tracking and build up baseline data. Focus group work has been done through the *Amigos* project where Y10 students help those in Y7 with reading skills. A project for Y8 high achievers has provided extra classes and curriculum enrichment. Work with boys in Y10 has been supported. A focus group of 50 Y11 students was enabled to improve their performance at GCSE. Several representatives of external agencies were interviewed and all spoke highly of the support given to students in the school.

66. Teams of tutors are chosen to achieve a reasonable gender and ethnic balance. Heads of year meet regularly and monitor some trends, eg. detentions. Tutor time is much less under the new school day arrangements. It is sufficient to undertake some key duties but these are, as yet, applied inconsistently and patchily. In the best tutor groups students are well known and feel they can go to their tutor for help. Other tutors have not built up a sufficient rapport with the group or with individuals and tutor time is wasted. Homework diaries are not checked or signed by some tutors and there are some inadequacies in proper recording of attendance and effective use of the detailed procedures which include conduct and truancy reports. Some tutors do not check reasons for lateness or insist on consistent standards of behaviour. More needs to be done to clarify the core rôles of the tutor and to monitor the quality and effectiveness of tutorial work. There is some good practice to be shared and spread including good joint work by tutor and class teacher and good home/school liaison.

67. A Teacher Support Unit (TSU) provides a cooling off opportunity for students at risk of exclusion. It is used to reintegrate students and to raise expectations of persistently disruptive students. Entry to the unit is a result of an incident report agreed by the head of faculty. Senior staff and year heads look after students in the unit on a rota basis. The advice and involvement of the LEA Pupil Referral Unit staff and the Refugee Education Officer are valued. The rôle of the unit is being reviewed.

68. Students' personal development is supported through the *PaCE* programme which has recently been developed. The course aims to develop mutual respect between students, to enable them to make decisions in a strong moral framework, and to develop their awareness of their roles as citizens. The programme also covers all the required elements of health, sex and drugs education and good use is made of appropriate external agencies such as the Police and medical services. Students have weekly lessons which are taught by a number of different teachers. Lessons seen during the inspection were almost all satisfactory or good. Teachers are still gaining familiarity with this new programme.

69. There is a co-ordinator for careers guidance and work experience. In Y9 students have two days off timetable for *industry challenge*. Visitors present the programme. These include industrialists, the army, the CITB, trade unions, the TEC, and local government. Students do some self-evaluation. The careers adviser talks to Y10 *PaCE* groups about the means of accessing careers information. *Look ahead* booklets are provided in each of Y9, Y10 and Y11. Lower attaining students receive priority for careers interviews. The hope is to provide interviews for all students, however, and work towards action planning for the National Record of Achievement. Parents can participate in interviews and the careers adviser attends parents' evening in Y9 to Y11. The sixth form benefit from careers interviews, university open days and conferences. Work experience (two weeks) is provided in Y11 and some is also provided in Y12. Employers help with a preparation day for work experience and debriefing is done, using employers' report. Almost all placements in Y11 and Y12 are visited by teachers. There are no problems with ethnicity regarding work placements.

70. A range of relevant policies and suitable child protection arrangements are in place. The behaviour policy has recently been reviewed.

71. Considerable work has been done to reduce permanent exclusions and improve attendance. A number of changes and initiatives are relatively new and have yet to take full effect. Focus group initiatives have had a good impact on behaviour.

72. Arrangements for student support and guidance have been improved. A strong structure has been established. Parents speak well of the way in which the school tackles problems such as bullying. Students' attitudes in lessons are now satisfactory and often good. Behaviour around the school and punctuality to lessons and to school require further work. Some successful initiatives have improved student motivation and achievement. Further improvement requires a completion of the review of the TSU and its contribution to behaviour modification, increased parental participation in monitoring student progress, and wider opportunities for students to take responsibility in lesson and in other aspects of school life.

73. IEPs are now being written by learning support staff. They are being circulated initially to staff in English, science and mathematics. Some of these IEPs also contain behavioural targets. Systems for reviewing IEPs have yet to be developed. There is a lack of clarity about behavioural difficulties and SEN. There are no behaviour management plans. Some students are referred to the Learning Support department because of emotional and behavioural difficulties, but many more are dealt with by pastoral staff, and the focus then tends to be on a disciplinary route. As a result a number of students, including some on the SEN register, are sent to the TSU, or are excluded from school.

74. The school is served by an educational psychologist who, this term, is a locum and has not yet had much contact with the school. A counsellor from the Pupil Referral Unit visits once a week, to provide support for a few students, and a teacher from the Pupil Referral Unit is in the school for half a day a week this half term, working with students in Y8 and Y9 who are at risk of exclusion. These are both good provisions but, given the degree of difficulty of some students the level of counselling provided is insufficient. In addition, sessions of speech and language therapy are being provided this half term to a group of students with various communication difficulties. A session was seen during the inspection, and was very effective.

75. EAL staff offer an open door to students in the lunch hours, to provide additional help with homework and coursework and to allow access to books and computers. Members of the Sixth form provide support for students to practice literacy skills. Many of the students arriving in the school are refugees or asylum seekers, and the EAL teachers provide a great deal of additional support to these students, both practical and emotional. There is no counselling available to these students. The ethos in the EAL department is very supportive of students.

76. Wherever possible, the EAL teachers make links with parents and families of their students, contacting them if there are difficulties, and attending parents' evenings to meet them. They use other teachers and students as interpreters. They try to involve parents in their children's learning, for example by the loan of books and tapes. They also include them in activities, such as running a stall at the school's summer fair with food from different countries.

77. There is a health and safety policy. Staff are aware of procedures. There is good signing, fire precautions are displayed, fire extinguishers are regularly checked, and exits are kept clear. There is a medical room. There is a general problem of trailing electrical leads in classrooms. Other issues are:

- in art: no lock on main switches to kilns; kilns should be checked annually; no guard on the pug mill; dust levels in the clay room are too high; clay sumps need to be cleared regularly; inadequate standard of cleaning; trailing plugs



- in DT: some machinery lacks kick switches/micro switches; floors in rooms 117 and 223 are dangerous; leaks in room 117; health and safety notices required in rooms 119/120; chipped Formica and hygiene in food room 221
- in IT: a printer on top of a filing cabinet.

### **Partnership with parents and the community**

78. Parents are supportive of the school although not very actively. The school aims to try to involve them more in the education of their children. Some evening meetings have been arranged on curriculum matters which have been quite well attended but, for example, only ten parents attended the pre-inspection meeting and only 29 (4% of the families) responded to the questionnaire. Links with the parents of students with SEN are being developed. Parents of students with statements of SEN attend annual reviews. Parents are now being sent copies of IEPs and are asked to sign that they have been seen. Parents are able to contact SEN staff if they have any queries and these teachers write to parents at the beginning of each year to inform them which teacher is to provide individual support. Parents are contacted when the school has concerns and they are required to countersign daily any report cards for poor conduct or attendance. The key point for action from the previous inspection remains - the school needs to strengthen its efforts to involve parents more in the life of the school.

79. The school uses letters, newsletters, student planners and progress reports to inform parents about school activities and their children's progress. Newsletters are sent only half-yearly and translation services are not normally used. The school brochure and governors' annual report to parents provide further information. There was some parental concern over the amount of information available and inspectors agreed that information on general matters could be improved.

80. Annual reports contain comprehensive comments on most subjects, together with test results and level indicators which can be compared with class averages and national expectations. There is good diagnosis of areas requiring improvement and some indications of the specific action necessary, but very few measurable targets. Improvements in targeting would turn good reports into very good ones, which parents could use to help them play their part in improving student performance. The reports for students studying A-level subjects are very good. The new tracking system provides parents five times per year with information on effort, attendance and punctuality in all subjects. This provides parents with valuable information for them to use to encourage their children to reach high standards, although inspectors found that the data on punctuality to lessons is suspect. Although further improvements should be made in the frequency of general communication about the school, the area of reporting is one in which the school has improved since the previous inspection

81. The school maintains satisfactory links with the community. Many local groups use the school premises, providing opportunities for dialogue with influential social and religious groups. Close liaison with outside agencies makes a good contribution to helping students to develop positive attitudes towards school. Partnership with these agencies has led to funding for specific projects, for example the tracking system and the *Amigos* mentoring initiative and provided trained counselling help for students. The local and wider communities also provide resources for curriculum-related activities such as theatre, gallery and museum visits, residential trips and foreign visits which enrich students' educational experience. Links with industry are sound and provide work experience in Y11 and Y12, assistance with in-school industrial conferences, input into the careers education programme and help with activities such as Young Enterprise. The school is keen to develop further the partnerships it has with the community and with parents. These items figure strongly in the school's aims.



## THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

### Leadership and management

82. The 1995 inspection report said: *leadership within the school is supportive and tolerant and provides effective vision and purpose but planning is too diffuse and not systematic*. Key issues for action included: *establish more systematic school development and financial planning*. The report criticised the varying effectiveness of implementation plans. Following the inspection the school went through a turbulent period arising from a major unanticipated budget overspend. It also suffered from changes in its intake arising from the popularity of surrounding schools which had adopted grant maintained status and become popular with parents. The governors effectively faced up to the budget challenge and agreed a framework for repayment whilst making some hard decisions about budget reductions. The governors have had consistent leadership from the chair of governors through this difficult period.

83. The present headteacher was appointed in September 1998 and immediately took decisive, vigorous and effective action to address a number of key issues. He presented a discussion paper to the whole staff at the end of the autumn term 1998 outlining priorities for action. Prominent were the need to improve teaching and the rôle of heads of faculty in monitoring and improving standards. They were given additional time for lesson observation. Baseline data, already in place, has been enhanced and made available to all staff. The LEA Education Standards Unit was invited to look at teaching and make recommendations for improvement. A team of ten observed lessons and made specific note of good practice and areas for improvement. Their recommendations were widely circulated. There is clear evidence that the priority given to the quality of teaching has resulted in improvements. Each member of the SMT has been linked to subject departments in order to monitor and improve standards. The newly appointed head also gave a clear lead to the improvement of student behaviour. Positive behaviour strategies have been introduced. Students' attitudes in lessons are almost always positive. More has yet to be done to improve punctuality and student behaviour around the school. Even so the headteacher's clear lead is underpinned by his constant presence around the school. He has reviewed the management structure and obtained the approval of governors to some changes in the staffing and management structure. Key stage co-ordinator posts have gone and the rôle of year heads strengthened. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) post is currently vacant but the new SENCO who arrives in January will be a member of the SMT. Responsibility posts have been created for literacy and *PaCE*. The status and grade of the librarian has been enhanced and all job descriptions have been updated. A serious physical attack on the headteacher by a member of the public made a strong impact on staff and governors because of the resolute way in which he continued his normal work immediately after the attack.

84. At the time of his appointment the headteacher addressed the need for a development plan and drafted one for the approval of governors. In all, the new headteacher has made a strong impact on the school in his first twelve months of leadership and has provided clear priorities focused on raising achievement and improving the popularity of the school. Much remains to be done but serious weaknesses have been addressed and vigorous action has been taken, all in a climate of clear direction, openness and encouragement of all staff to work positively together to improve standards.

85. The SMT consists of the headteacher, two deputies and an assistant headteacher. This is to be augmented when the new SENCO arrives. At the time of the inspection the SMT was covering a wider range of duties and also dealing with other absences through illness at middle management level. Routine and strategic meetings were observed. They are well run,

provide for good discussion and clear guidelines for action. Current key issues under consideration are the new curriculum 2000 requirements, including collaborative developments with other institutions, and the enhancement of school security. Clear notes are taken, responsibilities are well defined and detailed plans are made for staff consultation. All SMT members have some responsibility for pastoral aspects, including the headteacher. A large committee of middle and senior managers has been replaced with separate academic and pastoral meetings. Minutes are shared but a stronger link between the two groups needs to be formally established even though there is some cross membership arising fortuitously from current responsibilities.

86. Middle management rôles are being developed. Faculty heads now have a clear responsibility for monitoring of standards of teaching and learning. There has been considerable help in developing this rôle. Extra time has been allocated to faculty heads for classroom observation, baseline data has been developed further and shared with teachers. The student tracking system was initiated two years ago. This is being extended to cover attainment and progress. There are now clear line management links between SMT and departments. The effectiveness of middle managers is variable in terms of their monitoring developmental rôles. Departmental development plans are mostly not rigorous enough, do not link clearly with school priorities, and do not include specific success criteria and targets. Some curriculum managers monitor standards effectively and set clear targets for improvement. Others do not yet move beyond the tasks of day-to-day management. Similarly heads of year are variable in the degree to which they are promoting effective monitoring of attendance, punctuality and behaviour. Many tutors are unclear of their rôle or make limited use of the tutor time to monitor progress and promote good behaviour. The SMT should monitor and improve the performance of middle managers. They should also review the effectiveness of the new pastoral management arrangements. Although administrative arrangements for communication are in place they should be consistently applied. Not all tutors complete records correctly and there is a need to build up effective two-way communication between the various levels of management and between the academic and pastoral aspects of the work. This might emerge from the developing student tracking system.

87. The chair of governors has led the governing body since just before the last inspection to the present. Governors have tackled difficult financial decisions and dealt with a major industrial dispute during a period of almost two years as a result of the budget crisis. They prepared well for the appointment of a new headteacher and received good support and advice from the LEA. There is an effective development plan and a strategic plan which links educational and financial planning is being developed. The development plan includes some clear targets and other success criteria. Targets are set for the school. Governors' committees are: finance and premises; development, pay appeals, discipline (dealing with permanent exclusions); and an appointments committee. Committees have clear terms of reference. The vacancy for a governor with responsibility for SEN has just been filled. Governors bring a good range of experience particularly in education and finance. A reasonable range of policies are in place. Some, such as the behaviour policy, have recently been reviewed. It would be helpful to establish a proper scheme for a systematic review and evaluation of student tracking.

88. The management of student support has been reviewed. A start has been made with the production of IEPs. The rôle of the Teaching Support Unit is being reconsidered. A start has been made on behavioural modification work with external support from the LEA Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) on behaviour modification work. The aim should be to successfully reintegrate students to normal lessons. There is also a need to develop the work of support staff.

89. There is a recently appointed governor with responsibility for SEN who has not yet had

the opportunity of carrying out the role. The special educational needs policy does not follow the Code of Practice requirements, but a new policy has been drafted which will meet statutory requirements. The SEN section of the annual report to parents does not meet statutory criteria.

90. There is an acting SEN co-ordinator who has been seconded to the school for a term. She is working very hard and effectively to develop systems in line with the Code of Practice. IEPs with clear targets are now being developed for students at stages 2-5 of the Code of Practice. Records are being collected, so that information about students is easily accessible to SEN staff. The SEN co-ordinator is developing support systems to ensure that students at stages 2-5 receive the necessary support on both an individual and an in class basis. She has not yet had time to act in an advisory capacity to subject staff, to enable them to meet the needs of students in lessons by developing their understanding of differentiation and ways of meeting the needs of all their students. There is a special educational needs register which has been circulated to all staff. Regular updates are given at staff meetings and it is planned to circulate the register on a termly basis. Annual reviews are held at the appropriate times and most reports are on file, although the previous system for holding reports means that not all were available for scrutiny. Students are receiving support as directed in their statements.

91. Several statutory requirements are not met. These include National Curriculum requirements for ICT provision at KS4, IT requirements in other subjects; and reporting to parents in music, PE, and IT. There is inadequate provision for collective worship and RE in the sixth form. There is no staff appraisal system. Some elements of SEN provision are not in line with the Code of Practice. There are several health and safety issues listed in paragraph 77.

92. In the past fifteen months many major issues have been addressed. It is now necessary to build on these achievements to further enhance the quality of teaching, the standards of behaviour around the school, and opportunities for students to take responsibility.

## **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

### ***Staffing***

93. Generally the school has sufficient teachers with appropriate qualifications and experience. In the main staff are deployed effectively according to their qualifications. There have been difficulties in recruitment in some specialist areas such as IT and science and, at the time of the inspection, the school was relying on some agency staff and non-specialist teachers. The head of RE and the deputy head of mathematics are not qualified teachers. Teachers working with students with SEN and EAL are qualified and/or experienced for the work. Excluding the unqualified teachers, the pupil:teacher ratio (PTR) is 15.1:1, which is below the national average of 17.1:1. The class contact ratio is 76%, which is around the national average. Average class sizes are 22 in KS3 and 20 in KS4. The main reason for the low PTR is the high proportion of students on the SEN register, but there are some inefficiencies, with small group sizes in some subjects in the sixth form.

94. In addition to three SEN support assistants, there are ten other education support staff. These include a learning resource centre manager and eight departmental technicians. There are six administrative and clerical staff. The number of non-teaching staff is high for the size of the school. The non-teaching support staff contribute well to the school but their total cost amounts to 9% of the school budget, which is much higher than the average. The learning support assistants are not qualified, but are being encouraged to attend courses to develop their skills.

95. Staffing matters are dealt with by the full governing body, though there is a pay and appeals committee, a discipline committee, and an appointments committee. The staffing policies and procedures are based mainly on LEA model policies. These policies are appropriate and there is a staff handbook which contains some useful information and procedures. One of the deputy heads has recently taken over responsibility for staff professional development plus some aspects of staffing. Staff development is being put on to a systematic basis. The deputy head controls the standards fund budget and ensures that staff development is linked to the school development plan and to subject development plans. The systems for staff development are satisfactory and include some evaluation of the effectiveness of programmes. Decisions on allocation of the standards funds are discussed by the senior management team and some of the funds are delegated directly to heads of faculty. Bids for in-service training (INSET) are made on a standard form which asks how the benefit of the INSET is to be spread, but monitoring of the effectiveness of INSET is patchy. In addition to INSET there are whole school staff development days which are generally linked with major school improvement targets. Arrangements for the induction of newly qualified teachers (NQT) and other new staff are now good. There is an induction booklet which follows the new DfEE guidance and the eight NQT currently in the school have followed a sensible programme which included an induction day in July and some LEA and school sessions. Each NQT is also observed at least twice in each term. All meetings of the NQT are open to other new staff.

96. There are job descriptions, mainly in generic form, for all staff, though these do not all highlight key responsibilities and priorities. Appraisal was introduced some years ago, based on the LEA scheme, but was never fully implemented. The school began moves towards Investors in People accreditation and an annual system of individual reviews was trialled for one year. However, these reviews have now stopped and individual professional portfolios are no longer maintained. There is currently no appraisal system and this is necessary not only to meet statutory requirements but also to manage the performance of staff and provide them with appropriate professional development.

97. There have been annual conferences for the senior management team and heads of faculties and a few individuals are doing higher degrees. None is yet involved in the National Professional Qualification for Headship. Working parties have been set up in some areas (staff development and equal opportunities) and this helps individual development. Faculty meetings are moving from mainly administration to include some professional development. Except for NQTs there is little use of mentoring or coaching as bases for professional development. The school should consider the benefits of moving forward again on Investors in People. There is a need for a systematic professional development plan which includes provision:

- for managers at all levels to support them in their management rôle and to help ensure consistent implementation of policies and improved standards
- for all staff on teaching styles and strategies for meeting the different needs of all students within each class
- further consolidation of work done on behaviour management for some staff
- and for all staff to enhance their ICT skills, knowledge and understanding.

### ***Accommodation***

98. The school stands on a large site, but with statutory limitations on expansion. Currently there are sufficient rooms to meet curriculum needs but the corridors are too narrow to cope easily with present student numbers. Access for the disabled is limited to part of the ground floor. The new extension for mathematics has considerably improved the quality of

accommodation since the previous inspection. Some extension to the front offices and some redecoration have improved the building. Rooms are large enough to allow flexibility in teaching methods to be employed. Internally the school is clean but the exterior is in need of renovation.

99. Some subject rooms require improvement. These are in DT, where rooms need upgrading and in science, geography and art, where redecoration and/or refurbishment is needed. The SEN department has two rooms for individual and group teaching, together with an office for the special educational needs co-ordinator. There is good provision for sport and physical education. The learning resource centre is large, though under-used. Display work is of variable quality, but often enhances the learning environment. The school's financial position restricts spending on accommodation largely to essential maintenance and health and safety issues. The premises are widely used by the local community.

### ***Learning resources***

100. Spending on this area has improved substantially since the previous inspection. It is now above the national average and this has gone a long way towards eliminating the shortages referred to before. The learning resource centre (LRC) was opened shortly after the previous inspection to address the problems which had been identified by management. Provision is much improved though there are still some weaknesses. There is a full-time librarian and students in Y7 and Y12 are given lessons on using the LRC. More staff have a vision of the centre's potential, and there is good consultation between staff and the LRC manager. Despite all this, there is a long way to go and the LRC is not yet the quality resource it should be for students. There are weaknesses in the books and resources to support some subjects. The school, especially the English department, needs to drive the development of the LRC. There has been improvement but much remains to be achieved.

101. Departmental resources are considerably improved since the previous inspection and are good in most departments. There are still some shortages of books and other resources in SEN, science, DT.

102. Resources for special educational needs are limited. There are some good reading books, but many other books, particularly those which support the curriculum, and materials are out of date. There is very limited access to ICT for SEN students, and no laptops are provided for students for whom these might provide helpful support.

103. The computer facilities are very mixed. A new room (opened just before the inspection) provides Internet and CD-ROM access and has considerable potential. At the other extreme, some of the IT rooms contain old PCs with non-standard software and there are problems with space in the rooms, speed of the machines, and printing. Most departments have insufficient IT equipment. In some departments there are obsolete machines which are seldom used. The overall ratio of pupils:computers is given as 6:1 but the effective ratio is perhaps 10:1. Additional funding will be required as the curriculum is improved.

### **The efficiency of the school**

104. The chair of governors, who is also chair of the finance committee, plus the headteacher and the deputy headteacher who was responsible for resources, have a good overview of the main financial issues facing the school. During the mid-1990s the school maintained relatively high levels of staffing and this led to a rapid rise in its budget deficit. The budget deficit peaked at over £420,000 in April 1998. From 1997 the school's basic budget has been supplemented by the LEA and this, together with a closer link between strategic and financial

planning, has led to budget stabilisation, a balanced budget, and an initial reduction in the deficit. Even so, the deficit carried forward this year was £400,000 and the budgeted deficit for next year will be lower but still substantial. Since the appointment of the present headteacher a sensible development plan has been introduced and a three-year school strategic plan linked to financial planning is being developed with the governing body.

105. The budget is initially drawn up by the headteacher in discussion with the senior management team and the chair of finance. This is balanced against funding allocated by the LEA plus additional income from lettings, and additional grants for specific initiatives. The draft budget is mainly based on curriculum need and historical costs, together with requirements from the school development plan. The governors' finance committee is involved at this stage. Through the year there is monthly reconciliation with expenditure passed through the LEA financial systems. Each department is given a monthly report of the amount they have spent but there is central ordering so that departments cannot generally overspend. Governors are informed of expenditure and commitment termly. Departmental funding is primarily by a formula but there is a small fund held centrally for new initiatives. Given the current situation, departments are not generally allowed to carry unspent monies forward beyond the year end. There is tight control of expenditure and there are regular audits of the financial systems plus an annual audit of the cash account. The school keeps effective control of its finances.

106. The total expenditure last year was £2,721,000 which is about £2,971 per student. The budgeted expenditure this year is £2,745,000. The expenditure per student is significantly higher than the average for schools in outer London. One reason for the relatively high expenditure is the high proportion of students with SEN. Even so, expenditure is above average and the historical deficit is also a difficulty which must be faced. The PTR is low (15.1:1 against a national average of 17.1:1) and there are some inefficiencies in staffing and in the sixth form curriculum. There will also need to be some further expenditure on ICT, accommodation and learning resources.

107. The socio-economic circumstances and prior attainment of the students are below average. The students' progress is satisfactory, though results remain below average. The cost per student is high. Students' attitudes are satisfactory though there is some unsatisfactory behaviour. Teaching is unsatisfactory at KS3. The school is not yet giving satisfactory value for money.



## **PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS**

### **ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE**

#### **English**

108. About half the students joining the school in Y7 have reading ages at least two years below their chronological ages and nearly two-thirds of students are speakers of English as an additional language. Standards of literacy on entry are low. Results of national tests at the end of KS3 have been well below the national average for some years but they improved steadily from the time of the last inspection until 1998. There was, however, a drop in 1999. GCSE results at grades A\* to C in English language have remained consistently well below the national average for five years; in that time, however, overall pass rates, from A\* to G, have improved and now approach the national average. Girls do better than boys but the gap is not as wide as is the case nationally. Results in GCSE English literature, which is taken by about two-thirds of the cohort, have for the last three years been above the national average for grades A\* to C. Relatively large numbers of students re-sit GCSE English language in the sixth form but few - only eleven per cent in 1999 - gain the C grades they are seeking. The number of students taking A-level English literature and results at the higher grades have both declined in recent years. However, in 1999 the eight students who took the examination all gained pass grades.

109. The English faculty analyses results of national tests and public examinations in some detail and a number of strategies have been put in place to raise the performance of boys and of under-achieving minority groups. Recent changes in practice have included weekly literacy lessons for all students in KS3 in addition to their regular English lessons and a revision of the English curriculum to include more structured language work. It is too soon to evaluate these initiatives fully but there are signs that students' writing is becoming more accurate as a consequence of the increased emphasis on language study. The successful impact of the literacy project on student attainment and progress is evident in English and other subjects.

110. The evidence of inspection shows that at the end of KS3 attainment in English is generally below national expectations. At the end of KS4 students reach and fall below expectations in about equal proportions: work in the current Year 11 indicates that these students are likely to do better in the English language GCSE examination than the 1999 cohort. Progress is satisfactory in KS3 and good in KS4. Students with special educational needs make progress at broadly the same rate as their peers. Students taking the A-level course are not yet achieving in line with national norms but they are making good progress.

111. As speakers many students in KS3 lack fluency. Even those who are confident and forthcoming use only a narrow range of vocabulary. By the end of KS4 there is a marked improvement in standards of oracy: particularly among students of middle and high attainment discussion skills develop quite well and there are examples of effective presentations, for example, Y11 students presented to the class aspects of their work on 'Wuthering Heights' with confidence and some dramatic flair. Sixth-formers are reticent in discussion but generally make their points clearly.

112. Reading comprehension generally meets the demands of texts read in class. Weaker readers in both key stages are often helped by their teachers' use of differentiated background materials. Students do not read widely and the faculty has so far failed to encourage many to develop their personal reading. In KS4 most students have a sound grasp of texts studied for examinations, and those of higher attainment are beginning to use evidence well to support their interpretations. A-level students have a thorough knowledge of texts and are learning

some skills of analysis.

113. Standards of writing vary quite widely but at all stages and especially among girls there are examples of fluent, lively and accurate written work. Persistent problems for many students are insecure grasp of standard English and weak spelling and punctuation. The range of writing styles and the ability to take readership into account develop satisfactorily overall. For all students and especially for those with SEN the use of IT in re-drafting is helpful in improving accuracy and presentation. Students taking A-level make good progress in structuring their essays and in substantiating their arguments with reference to the text.

114. Attitudes to English are sound in KS3 and good in KS4 and the sixth form. Most students are attentive and responsive, and their behaviour in class is sensible, but a few classes in KS3 are prone to restlessness and chatter and are easily distracted from their work. In KS4 and the sixth form the quality of group work improves and there is generally a good atmosphere for learning.

115. The majority of teaching is satisfactory and better. In about two-fifths of lessons it is good or very good and in about one in seven there are significant shortcomings. Strengths include good subject knowledge, clearly formulated and stated objectives, careful planning and good use of well-chosen teaching materials. Some, but not yet all, teachers usefully differentiate approaches and materials to meet the particular learning needs of students with special educational needs or with English as an additional language. Questioning is usually good though not always well enough used to check and extend students' understanding. In most classrooms the atmosphere is friendly but businesslike, and teachers have firm expectations of hard work and good behaviour; in a few, however, interruptions and mildly silly behaviour are tolerated. In these cases learning is impeded. Marking of written work is generally constructive but occasionally bland and over-generous. Not all teachers are consistent in their use of grading scales.

116. Curriculum planning has developed since the last inspection: good work has been done on formulating policies, revising schemes of work, increasing language study, introducing differentiation and monitoring curriculum implementation. The department has made a strong contribution to the school's literacy policy and strategy. The head of faculty is aware of what more needs to be done in these areas and also in reading development, the organisation of support for students with SEN, the more consistent use of IT and in making links with the drama department. Procedures for assessment are sound.

117. The faculty is effectively led. Monitoring of teaching is thorough and constructive and the head of faculty gives good support and advice to the three newly qualified teachers in a hardworking and otherwise experienced team. Resources have been considerably enhanced since the last inspection but the relatively well-stocked library is underused to support students' wider reading.

### ***Drama***

118. Drama is taught to all students in KS3 and is available as an optional GCSE course in KS4. GCSE results for grades A\* to C in 1999 approached the national average; this marks a significant improvement on results in the previous two years.

119. Standards of attainment in both key stages are in line with national expectations. Progress is sound and sometimes good. In KS3 students are given a firm grounding in drama skills and conventions; by the end of the key stage they can use simple technical terms confidently and correctly. Standards of performance develop well in many cases but planning and preparation are variable in quality. Students' ability to evaluate their own and their peers'

performance is soundly established by Y9 and continues to improve in KS4. In this key stage there are examples of accomplished improvisation, showing good understanding of character. Written work helps students to consolidate their learning and to reflect on performance.

120. Most students respond positively to the subject and many participate enthusiastically in lessons. In KS3, however, there are some who find it difficult to concentrate and who become restless even when the work interests and motivates them. By KS4 many have learned to collaborate well in pairs or groups.

121. Teaching is good overall. Lessons are well planned to contain a variety of activities, which are clearly explained. Ground rules for behaviour are generally well established in a friendly but firm fashion. The teaching often provides students with good models of performance and evaluation. Just occasionally group work needs clearer direction and students would benefit from more guidance on how to focus as an audience.

122. Schemes of work for KS3 clearly identify the range of skills to be taught, and the assessment framework is satisfactory. Closer liaison with the English department would improve curriculum planning. The drama department, with the rest of the arts faculty, contributes well to the social and cultural life of the school through production and through its contacts with local theatre and workshops.

123. Accommodation for the subject is satisfactory though space is limited for work with larger classes. Since the last inspection equipment and resources have been improved.

## **Mathematics**

124. In KS3 standards of attainment are generally well below national norms and there has been no significant improvement over the past four years. In the 1999 national tests at the end of the key stage only 42% of students attained level 5 or above compared with over 60% nationally. Attainment in lessons is generally in line with these results.

125. Attainment in KS4 classes overall is much better than in KS3 and this is reflected in GCSE examination results. In 1999 about 41% of students gained higher grades compared with 45% nationally. Although this figure is still below the national norm there is evidence of good value added in KS4. The attainment of girls was significantly better than boys.

126. The overall progress of students in KS3, particularly in Y7 and Y8, is unsatisfactory. Many of the more able students under-achieve due to lack of sufficient challenge in much of their work, including insufficient development of algebra. Less able students spend too long copying drawings and diagrams without getting to the core learning. In some instances students were being taught mechanical procedures without developing the underlying concepts so their learning lacked sufficient depth.

127. In several classes all students were given the same work although their level of prior attainment ranged from level 2 to 5. In one such class half the lesson was spent on an overlong discussion of a simple sequence (5, 10, 15, 20 ..... ) generated by considering numbers of cars having five tyres. Students were then required to copy the example from the board. The more able did this very quickly but because of their poorer skill levels the less able students took much longer whilst the rest of the class waited. The process was repeated with a similar example. Expectations were too low and little progress was made by anyone.

128. The majority of students improve their numeracy skills to some extent through KS3 but

many lack the range of mental strategies necessary to enable them to calculate quickly and accurately. Few use estimation routinely to check results, for example, when using a calculator. Although teachers are beginning to introduce short practice tests on number, there is a need for a more coherent and focused departmental approach to developing numeracy in the context of a whole school policy.

129. In KS4 the progress of all students improves but the more able make particularly good progress. For example, a top set in Y11 rapidly mastered quadratic equations and were able to use the formula or graphical methods efficiently in a range of problems. The progress of the less able and those with SEN is more variable and some would benefit from a reintroduction of the Certificate of Achievement as an alternative to GCSE.

130. In the sixth form mathematics is a popular choice and a wide range of students is accepted on A-level courses. In 1999 the proportion of students gaining grades A or B was roughly in line with the national average. Attainment of current A-level classes, however, is below national expectations and many who took GCSE as intermediate level are struggling with the algebra in Y12. A large number of sixth form students re-sit GCSE but not all gain real benefit from this. In 1999, for example, only three out of the 46 entrants attained grade C.

131. Students are lively and many take time to arrive and settle down at the start of lessons but they are generally willing to learn and they respond very positively when the teaching is good. Most form good relationships with their peers and with teachers. They co-operate well when working in pairs and in groups. They are capable of sustaining concentration when the work is interesting and many willingly contribute to discussions in spite of difficulties with language. The majority take care with presentation of their work and have contributed to some very good wall displays. A significant minority in many lessons persistently chatter while the teacher is talking and this is not always dealt with effectively.

132. The quality of teaching in mathematics is variable. 70% of the lessons seen were satisfactory or better and 33% were good or very good, but in KS3 nearly half the lessons seen were unsatisfactory. In the best lessons learning objectives were clearly expressed at the outset and reviewed at the end. Lessons were well planned with interesting beginnings that engaged the attention of all students. Expectations were high.

*In one lesson students were asked "If five cats have a mean age of 8 years, what age could each cat be?". This was discussed in groups and answers were compared. The teacher gradually introduced other constraints such as a modal age of 5. Discussions were animated and earlier learning was drawn upon to good effect in arriving at lists of possible combinations. The lesson had good pace and was well broken up into group and plenary sessions. Students were becoming more aware of the significance of the various kinds of average and adding real depth to their understanding.*

133. Most of the unsatisfactory lessons involved mixed ability groups. Teachers took little or no account of prior learning and so activities were not well matched to the needs of students. The start of lessons was often unimaginative and objectives were not made clear to students. Question and answer sessions sometimes dragged on too long so that students lost interest. Expectations were often too low and lessons lacked pace or challenge for the more able. There were examples of poor and inappropriate management of students' behaviour.

134. Much effort has recently been put into producing the departmental handbook but further development is needed. The schemes of work, particularly in KS3, need to be based more clearly on learning objectives rather than textbook chapters. Guidance on preferred teaching

and learning styles and activities should be included so that teachers are clearer about what is expected of them. Textbooks would then provide the main resource but would sit alongside other resources to ensure a proper basis for matching activities to the needs of all students. Use of ICT is not yet built in and the faculty is not fulfilling National Curriculum requirements in this respect.

135. Regular summative assessment is in place and the newly introduced half-termly tests provide useful data for tracking students' attainment and progress. This information may need to be augmented with other detail to provide records that show what individual students have learnt so that teachers may more readily take account of this in their planning, especially when taking over a new class. There is little evidence at present of students being involved in self-assessment and short-term target setting as part of their ongoing teaching and learning in mathematics.

136. Day-to-day management of the department is satisfactory but monitoring of curriculum delivery and teaching needs to be strengthened. Lesson observation has begun but it needs to have a sharper focus and be followed up by evaluation to support staff development and carry the department forward. The mathematics development plan currently consists of a list of proposed activities and needs considerable further work if it is to become an effective mechanism for improving standards. The need for clearer objectives, priorities, responsibilities, time-scales, and success criteria should be addressed.

## **Science**

137. Since the last inspection there have been many staff changes. At the time of the inspection three agency teachers were employed. Overall standards in science are below national expectation at KS3 and moving towards national expectation at KS4, A-level and GNVQ.

138. Attainment in the National Curriculum tests at the end of KS3 in 1999 was well below the national average; in 1999 34% gained level 5 and above. This is a significant deterioration since the last inspection. Students performed in line with what could be expected in 43% of lessons seen in KS3. Many students are able to explain orally new concepts such as energy transfers and breathing. Many of the students are acquiring sound knowledge across life and living processes, materials and their properties and physical processes but have limited opportunity to demonstrate their abilities in experimental and investigative science in day-to-day lessons. Students' development of appropriate knowledge and understanding is secure. The use of ICT is not integrated into lessons and there is only limited development.

139. Attainment improves from KS3 to KS4 as exemplified by the value added data from KS3 to GCSE. At KS4 the overall standard in double science is close to the national averages for grades A\* to C, 46% of the cohort in 1999. There has been a welcome steady improvement since the last inspection. Girls perform better than boys do and girls' attainment is at the national average. In lessons this standard is being maintained. Attainment in lessons is sound in relation to their abilities in all areas of science and is close to the national expectation. They show clear knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts as for instance in a lesson on genetics. Students have the opportunity to demonstrate their abilities in experimental and investigative science through set investigations as seen in a lesson on rates of reaction. There is opportunity to use information communication technology as was seen in a lesson on genetics using Internet access although no use was seen of handling and displaying scientific data.

140. At A-level in 1999, the overall standards in biology and chemistry and physics are just

below national expectations. At GNVQ Intermediate the pass rate was below national expectation and had declined from 1998. In sixth form lessons students show appropriate knowledge and skills and their understanding of scientific terms and concepts is developing as illustrated in a lesson on circular motion and one on reaction order. The number of students taking A-level physics is very low in Y12 (4). GNVQ Advanced has recently been introduced and attainment in lessons is at national expectations as exemplified by a lesson on industrial processes.

141. At KS3 progress over time is sound. In lessons progress is generally satisfactory and sometimes good. It is nearly always dependent on the quality of teaching. Most students are able to talk about their work and can place current activities and ideas in the context of previous learning as in a lesson on weathering of rocks. Progress in all the lessons is satisfactory with a few being good. The majority works at an appropriate pace to the task set with reasonable accuracy and a satisfactory standard of presentation. There is limited progress in some aspects of investigative skills and processes. Most students support one another in their learning. Students with special educational needs usually make satisfactory progress in lessons as in a lesson on breathing. Students with EAL make good progress in lessons as seen by the opportunities to use multi-lingual wall displays as in a lesson on metals.

142. Students make better progress in KS4 than in KS3. In three-quarters of the lessons seen progress was good. A small number have difficulty in placing current activities and ideas in the context of previous learning. Overall, students are gaining scientific knowledge, understanding, and skills at an appropriate pace. In most lessons, they are acquiring new scientific concepts as in a lesson on genetics. All abilities work with accuracy and a satisfactory standard of presentation. It is always made clear what is expected of them but there are only limited opportunities to extend learning to new situations. Students with SEN make good progress in lessons due to a good balance between theory and application as was seen in a lesson on rates of reaction. Students with EAL make good progress in lessons as seen in the provision of additional material in a lesson on genetics.

143. In the sixth form progress is good but occasionally only satisfactory. Students are able to express relevant, coherent explanations and argument. This was evident in a lesson relating to light. Students are gaining scientific knowledge, understanding, and skills at an appropriate pace to their ability, for example, as in a lesson on reaction rates. In most lessons, they were acquiring new scientific concepts as in a lesson on circular motion. They work at an appropriate pace to the task set with sufficient accuracy and standard of presentation. They are able to discuss work in most lessons and consequently students are learning to support one another in their quest to become independent learners.

144. Students have good relationships with each other, respond well to opportunities to work collaboratively and have the confidence to share their achievements with others. They show interest and enthusiasm. The majority work hard and sustain concentration well. Motivation increases from KS3 to KS4. The positive ways in which most students respond is a particular strength at KS4. Students take lessons seriously and most students ask questions. They work safely and competently. Most students take care over their written work; presentation skills are usually good. Most lessons are characterised by harmonious relationships. In most lessons students are thoroughly involved in their work and derive a clear enjoyment from it.

145. The quality of teaching is often good or very good; this helps raise educational standards. The remainder of the teaching is satisfactory. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection report. Teachers have a clear grasp of their subject area. High expectations, good pace and purposeful activities are a particular strength in lessons where the quality of teaching is good or very good. There is recognition of language barriers and the use of word lists and

oral activities is evident where teaching is good or better. Marking is in line with school policy but greater use could be made of supportive comments to challenge standards and set improvement targets. The curriculum meets statutory and examination requirements. Schemes of work are in place. Not all contain an overview and more detail is required in the area of differentiation.

146. There is much that is good in the science faculty, its teaching is a strength and has improved since the last inspection. The faculty runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis; it is a newly re-organised team with many challenges. Many of the elements of good management are to be found in the faculty; this now needs to be brought together through strong purposeful leadership.

147. The four technicians provide good support. Resources are adequate and efficiently used. There have been improvements in the provision of textbooks but more will be needed for all students to have their own textbook in years 7 to 10. The accommodation still requires some redecoration, replacement of window blinds, and some refurbishment. There are still deficiencies in the provision of ICT as highlighted in the last inspection report.

148. Consideration should now be given to further developing a wider range of strategies, including literacy and ICT, to assist lower attaining students, especially boys, and higher achievers. This can be achieved through developing the team so that the willingness to contribute individual strengths to the common purpose is maximised and builds on the effective work already developing.

## **OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES**

### **Art**

149. Overall standards of attainment in art, particularly at KS3, have improved since the last inspection. The department offers a good quality of art education for all students.

150. By the end of KS3 the majority of students, including those with SEN, attain levels in art which are in line with national expectations. A minority of students attain above this. Personal research is used well to support class projects. Basic skills such as drawing are systematically developed over the key stage so students' ability to use a variety of media to make visual responses, particularly when working from observation, is good. Painting is particularly lively and vivid; students tackle colour work with confidence and enthusiasm.

151. Students are skilled at applying graphic techniques to create their design work but have few opportunities to explore their ideas through the use of computers. They show imagination and technical skill when making sculpture and can use a wide range of materials creatively. They are exposed to a great deal of information about art and artists and most have acquired a sound grasp of chronology, style and genre of art from different times and cultures.

152. By the end of KS4 attainment for the majority of students is above expected levels. GCSE results for 1999 were well above the national average, with 80% of students obtaining higher grades. 40% attained an A\* or A grade. These are outstanding results given the very wide range of ability of the students. Most students in Y10 and Y11 show well developed practical skills and are able to sustain a study from conception to realisation. They are confident in working independently in developing their ideas in a personal way, particularly when they are exploring their own cultural identity and communicating their feelings about important issues. All students taking A-level in 1998 achieved a grade and results were slightly above the national average. The work of the present A-level students shows mature, personal and innovative approaches to the interpretation of ideas. The standard of work from students following all levels of GNVQ is good; students on the advanced course are making highly individual and creative work which is well supported by a good knowledge of the work of professional artists. 1999 GNVQ results for art and design were good.

153. All students in KS3, including those on the SEN register, are making at least sound progress in lessons. Less able students make better progress in practical work than in their knowledge, understanding and appreciation of art. Students in KS4 make sound to good progress in all aspects of the art curriculum. Students on the A-level and GNVQ courses are making sound progress in all their course work.

154. Students are motivated, show interest in their work and concentrate well. They are well prepared for their lessons and complete their homework assignments on time. All students are respectful of their environment and take responsibility for their materials. They show initiative in using various sources to find out about artists and older students are familiar with visiting galleries and museums.



155. In all lessons teaching is at least satisfactory and in nearly two thirds of lessons it is good or very good. Teachers trust and believe in their students and always expect them to do their best. In return, students work hard and show pride in their work. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject and the different syllabuses used and can employ a fair range of teaching approaches. In the best lessons work is sufficiently challenging, time and resources are well used, and teachers supply a rich range of supporting materials. In all lessons teachers ensure that the aims are very clear to students and encourage them to use and understand specialist language. Planning is thorough and the methods used ensure that all students concentrate well and understand the concepts being taught. Good use is made of presentations about art and artists and the demonstration of techniques. Teachers capitalise on students' own cultures, experiences and interests to ensure that lessons are pertinent and meaningful. Expectations of behaviour are high and there is generally good classroom control. There is a system for assessing students' work which is consistently used by teachers and explained carefully to the students. Homework is appropriate, regularly set and marked.

156. Overall management is very good and leadership provides a clear vision for the development of the department. With the exception of IT, the curriculum meets statutory requirements and ensures a good balance of both attainment targets. To enhance the curriculum very good use is made of local artists, London galleries and residential cultural trips.

157. Although the department has created a visually rich learning environment with good displays, the general accommodation for art is in a poor state of repair. There are several issues concerning health and safety which the school will have to attend to immediately. Rooms are poorly heated and dirty; furniture is old and much of it is unfit for use.

158. The department now needs support to ensure that students have access to computers for design work and research, and that the accommodation is brought up to a higher standard.

## **Design Technology**

159. In KS3 students experience a range of activities including food, textiles and resistant materials (with graphics). Through a series of focused tasks and design assignments students build up a bank of skills, knowledge and understanding. Students develop folders of work, using a design framework, as they generate and develop their ideas. Work is well structured but the quality of graphics and presentation is too low. Staff should consider introducing a specific module of work to underpin this area of development. The range of products is satisfactory but more control of design criteria and emphasis on finish of products would improve the quality considerably. There is no provision within the faculty for students to use IT within subject studies but some students with computers at home do provide important inputs. Opportunities exist in textiles for students to use a numerically controlled embroidery machine for work in conjunction with their projects. There is some attractive and well-developed work but overall attainment at the end of the key stage is below national expectation.

160. Studies in KS4 are more specialised as students choose a GCSE course from food, textiles, resistant materials or graphics. Many design folders reflect students developing interests and a more innovative response to problems. Generally graphical techniques and presentational skills need improvement and IT is under-developed. More specific design briefs and a focus on key practical skills could improve overall quality. Despite staffing difficulties last year there was an improvement in the number of students gaining higher grades in GCSE. In food 45% of students were successful at the higher grade. Similarly, 43% in graphics and 66% in textiles also attained higher grades. Overall their achievement is close to the national average. However, 21% of students who started the course were not entered for the

examination because of coursework deficiencies. There is a marked imbalance between the achievement of girls and boys, with over three times as many girls gaining higher grades. Urgent remedial work is required on this. All three students who entered for A-level graphic communication passed the examination.

161. Students in KS3 make sound, or better, progress as they work through the range of tasks and assignments. Staff assess attainment and effort at the end of each termly module and they record national curriculum levels achieved in designing and making. Information is recorded centrally and used for student tracking and feedback. Parents also are kept informed of student progress. In KS4 many students make good progress in their chosen course but a significant minority lack motivation and under-perform. There is some evidence of uneven progress between students of different ethnic groups. Value added predictions indicate above average performance. Students with SEN and language problems are clearly identified and subject staff respond positively. More detailed information is required from IEPs to ensure that appropriate targets are set. Most students make sound progress. Students in the sixth form make good progress in their course. They develop appropriate learning skills and show evidence of personal style.

162. Many students show interest in their work and have the ability to concentrate for appropriate periods of time. There is a minority who are less motivated and whose work suffers because of bad behaviour. A significant proportion of students are not able to be entered for external examinations because of inadequate coursework. Some students are developing independent learning skills whilst others are more teacher dependent. Most show respect for equipment and facilities and observe codes of behaviour in specialist rooms. Attitudes are generally positive but too much work lacks quality and care.

163. The faculty has a recent history of staffing difficulties and this has affected the progression and continuity of some courses. Teachers plan their work well and organise resources appropriately. They work hard and use time effectively. The teaching team is well supported by two experienced technicians. Standards of discipline vary and more emphasis needs to be placed on the management of student learning. Assessment procedures are effective and information collected is used to feed back to students and parents. The quality of teaching is variable and ranges from very good to unsatisfactory. Of the teaching observed during the inspection 40% of lessons were unsatisfactory.

164. The head of faculty is absent on long-term sick leave and her duties are being covered by the deputy head of faculty. Documentation is satisfactory. Supply staff have been recruited to supplement the teaching team. Good use is made of display areas and some exemplar materials are used to improve the quality of student work. All students have access to DT but the size of groups can sometimes affect the quality and scope of project work. Accommodation is in need of enhancement and some areas, for example, flooring and a leaky ceiling, need upgrading to bring them into line with current health and safety standards. Some lathes, for example, lack kick switches and micro switches. Financial resources are limited and barely adequate for day-to-day running costs. Longer-term strategic planning is required to ensure that appropriate computer and CNC equipment is introduced into courses to support curriculum development. Lack of IT provision means that the programmes fail to completely satisfy the requirements of the National Curriculum.

## **Geography**

165. Students' attainment in geography at the end of Y9 is sound. They study the themes outlined in the National Curriculum, in the context of real places and at a range of scales from the local to worldwide. For example, Y9 students use their knowledge of the equatorial

rainforest ecosystem in discussing the advantages and problems associated with the exploitation of forests in Brazil. Most students write short passages competently and some longer pieces of writing are, at times, structured well. However, the use of the process of enquiry needs strengthening as also do the use of both fieldwork and computers. Students' attainment at the end of Y11 is good and, like that in lower year groups, shows a significant improvement on that reported at the last inspection. In the last two years GCSE results have been sound. In 1999, 66% of students entered gained higher grades but, unlike many schools, about a quarter of the year takes a support option rather than a humanities subject.

166. Students' progress in geography, particularly in Y10 and Y11, also shows an improvement since the last inspection. Older students made good progress in most of the lessons seen. In Y7 to Y9 progress was more limited when the work was not firmly located in real places. However, in some lessons, such as a Y8 study of flooding, students with learning difficulties were helped to make good progress by work being adapted to meet their needs.

167. The attitudes and behaviour of students in lessons is a strength of the subject. In general, students arrive promptly, settle down to work quickly, and sustain their concentration well. They behave well and work collaboratively in pairs or small groups when asked. Although older students show greater confidence in tackling longer tasks which involve individual study, this aspect of personal development needs further strengthening. The numbers who choose geography are sound, given that a quarter of the year take courses offering support in learning English or for learning difficulties.

168. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection: it was good in over half the lessons seen and satisfactory in nearly all the rest. In particular, there is less copying from textbooks and, this academic year, a wider range of activities both adds variety to lessons and strengthens important aspects of the subject. The adaptation of work to meet students' needs is being developed though it needs to be more widespread and clearly embedded in relevant documentation. Assessment, both day-to-day marking and the allocation of levels of attainment at KS3, needs further attention. In particular, assessment tasks need to offer students clear opportunities to match elements described in the different levels of attainment.

169. The sound work in geography is supported by well-qualified staff, some good quality and well-organised resources, clear documentation and the use of two adjacent rooms which have some good display. However, one room in particular is not well equipped and the use of other scattered rooms is unhelpful. The subject leadership shows some strengths and a range of important tasks has been identified in this year's development plan. They include, in particular, the need to extend both the range of activities and the assessment tasks in Y7 to Y9 and to enrich the work through the increased use of computers.

## **History**

170. Results at GCSE have fluctuated around national norms in the period since the last inspection. In 1999 they were above national norms. A-level groups are small but there is sustained success in preparing students to read history at university. The 1995 inspection report stated that a significant minority of students under-achieved at KS3. This is no longer so and significant improvement has been made. In lessons observed at KS3 attainment was in line with national expectations. Students are given a range of writing tasks and are enabled to develop key historical skills. In Y7 currently geography and history share half term blocks of time. However, by Y9 students have a secure knowledge base, can relate events to earlier periods studied and have an accurate understanding of causes. They are able to analyse sources effectively. Historical understanding and interpretation is sound or good and there is creditable work in historical enquiry. Students' written work is well organised. They also

develop good oral communication skills. In KS4 all students gain secure knowledge. Higher attainers have a grasp of detail which they are able to use in analysis of key events. This was seen in their GCSE studies of Russian and German history. They are encouraged to develop skills as independent learners. Students are able to recall and compare events from other periods. Research skills are honed and good essay work develops. There is a need to develop the use of ICT.

171. Progress is good or very good in most lessons and this is assisted by differentiated tasks and materials, particularly of benefit to lower attainers. There is scope for further extension work to be developed for high attainers. SEN students make satisfactory progress, especially where they receive in-class support. All other students make good or very good progress in lessons whatever their level of attainment. They are motivated and challenged to do their best. It is not surprising, therefore, that student attitudes to learning are good or very good in all lessons. They are enthusiastic, engaged in the task in hand, and develop an interest in the subject. In the positive learning environment they concentrate well. They rise to the frequent challenges which extend their understanding and skill.

172. The quality of teaching is a significant strength. Over four fifths of lessons seen were good or very good and there was no unsatisfactory teaching. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers provide challenge and have high expectations. Teachers know their subject well and use their own knowledge of recent new research to inform students, for example, in the sixth form studies of the reign of Henry VI. The teachers' enthusiasm provides a spark which ignites student interest and endeavour. Schemes of work are well planned and individual lessons provide a range of resources, methods and strategies. Some good differentiated tasks and materials have been developed. Management of students and the teaching process is strong. Assessment is sound and marking is good because it provides clear advice on what needs to be done. The teachers encourage understanding and empathy for other cultures. In the inspection week history students volunteered to have two minutes silence during break to remember the victims of war.

173. The curriculum meets National Curriculum requirements. It has good emphasis on cultural aspects relevant to the students at the school. Provision for ICT has to be developed. There are no field trips but regular visitors contribute to lessons, for example, holocaust survivors.

174. The subject is led effectively. The head of department keeps up to date with the knowledge and research developments in his subject. High expectations and a positive ability to be constructively self-critical are features of the department. There is a departmental development plan which identifies relevant improvements. It is informed by value added analysis. The level of resources is adequate.

175. The history development plan provides for review of the A-level course, development of schemes of work at KS4, and improvement of assessment at KS3. It also recognises the need to introduce ICT into the history curriculum. A specific timetable is required for this work.

### **Information Technology**

176. In KS3 IT is taught in Y7 and Y9. Whilst there is occasional use of IT in other subjects, this does not contribute significantly to IT attainment. Standards of attainment in Y9 are poor. Those seen in Y7 are variable and overall almost at the national norms. National Curriculum assessments last year were based only on attainment in data communication areas and ignore, for example, the very weak attainment in measurement and control. There is no IT

teaching in KS4 and little use of IT in other subjects. National Curriculum requirements are not met. In the sixth form, standards on the GCSE are currently poor with many students exhibiting weak IT skills even in word processing. In the A-level, standards vary considerably between individuals with a few home PC enthusiasts producing appropriate work but most limited by their weak initial skills and experience, plus the limitations inherent in use of *Filemaker* for their major projects.

177. Progress in most IT classes is satisfactory, limited by the low IT skills base of the students and by various other factors. Progress was unsatisfactory in the Y9 classes seen, limited by weak IT skills; hardware and systems problems; behaviour, motivation and boredom for some; difficulty with the software used and the workbook; and limited knowledge and understanding on the part of the teachers. Progress over time is worse, because the curriculum does not provide progressive experience. Progress in Y7 is lost in Y8; progress in Y9 lost through KS4.

178. Generally students are attentive, polite, willing to collaborate and obey the necessary rules of IT use. In the Y9 classes some of the boys took a long time to settle and there was a high level of chatter and noise throughout; students were content to play vaguely with the PCs and there was not enough on-task targeted work. Students are generally content to complete the task set at a minimum acceptable level and few take the responsibility to move on.

179. Teaching in the sixth form and Y7 is always at least satisfactory and is sometimes good. The teachers have sufficient knowledge of IT and the main teacher knows the course requirements and would be able to stretch students to good A-level grades. The methods and organisation of classes are appropriate and there is some evidence of joint planning of content. More detailed planning of the A-level course would be helpful. In a good class, the teacher had set up sensible individual projects and was assessing individual progress against criteria and agreed targets. These were updated and recorded and students were driven to improved standards of work. Teaching seen in Y9 was unsatisfactory. Teachers involved have limited recent IT experience and knowledge of the specific software and systems. In spite of support from an IT technician they were unable to ensure adequate progress from students. Weak management of some unmotivated students, coupled with difficulties with the facilities and software, meant that progress was too slow.

180. The curriculum in KS3 is very weak. Though all areas of the National Curriculum are partly covered, the emphasis is on data manipulation and communication. The acting Head of IT has developed some elements of the schemes of work, for example, introducing sensible homework tasks which cover some knowledge areas and some social implications. More formal summative assessment tasks are also being introduced. In A-level computing there is one class in which Y12 and Y13 are brought together and this is very difficult to organise and teach effectively.

181. The acting head of IT has pulled together adequate documentation and is trying hard to respond to the various issues. However, this is an area with considerable implications and potential across the school and should have stronger management at school level. The profile of IT in the school is too low and must be raised. If a policy of delivering IT through other subjects is to be successful there must be strong co-ordination, with subjects realising they must provide IT experience at an appropriate IT level. This will require better resources and systematic staff development. This may be an appropriate longer-term aim but, in the short term, taught IT is the only sensible answer. IT experience must be provided in Y8 and KS4. There is an IT handbook and an IT strategy. The strategy is sensible and will, if implemented, develop good use of IT across the school. It does not address IT National Curriculum requirements appropriately in the short term.

182. The acting Head of IT is the main IT teacher and is well qualified. Other staff used to teach IT have some experience and have attended INSET programmes but they need updating and to be given the opportunity to come to terms with the new curriculum and software. There has been an induction for some staff into the new facilities but this needs to be followed by systematic staff development covering IT skills, exploitation of IT in their subjects, National Curriculum requirements for their subjects (and for IT if they are to contribute to IT requirements). There is an IT technician who is experienced with PCs but not some of the computers in the school. He is also being used to support class teaching and does not yet have the necessary expertise.

183. The computer facilities are very mixed. A new room (opened just before the inspection) provides Internet and CD-ROM access and has considerable potential. At the other extreme, some of the IT rooms contain old PCs with non-standard software and there are problems with space in the rooms, speed of the machines, and printing. Additional funding will be required as the curriculum is improved.

### **Modern Foreign Languages**

184. All students now have the opportunity to learn either French or Spanish from Y7. German has been removed from the curriculum since the last inspection. Students may still take GCSE examinations in community languages and are given as much informal support as possible.

185. Given the low levels of attainment of students on entry, standards in KS3 are satisfactory. However, attainment is unsatisfactory compared to national norms in both French and Spanish. Attainment was unsatisfactory in nearly two thirds of the lessons seen. At KS4 standards of attainment are satisfactory. The percentage of students gaining higher grades in GCSE examinations remains below national average, but has improved steadily over the past three years, especially in French. Attainment is satisfactory in two thirds of lessons. The attainment of A-level students is satisfactory.

186. As at the last inspection, most students have the confidence to speak in the language they are learning. Their pronunciation and intonation are generally good, especially in Spanish. Able students in a Y9 class were capable of describing the city of Seville simply but fluently to their teacher and a Y11 class expressed their opinions of school, their uniform and, in particular, their recent trip to Spain with confident ease. The present A-level students are more hesitant than younger students to converse freely, even though they have developed good Spanish accents. From Y7 onwards, many students understand and respond to routine classroom business in the target language. However only a few, more capable, older students in Y11, or students in A-level classes are developing higher level listening skills and can understand easily, authentic, taped conversations played to them at near normal speed. In lessons observed, most reading was confined to reading from the board or short passages from the course book. By Y11, however, when given the opportunity, higher attaining students are able to read longer passages quickly and accurately. Most students present their written work carefully and take pride in their redrafted written assignments. Throughout KS3 they write simply, and sometimes at great length, about themselves. They have produced some inventive variations on routine topics such as football scores to exploit numbers and the description of a day in the life of a favourite sporting personality to practice daily routines. However, the quality of their writing is poor when compared with national norms. It rarely extends beyond lists of vocabulary within very simple sentences in the present tense. The department is on course to improve the quality of writing. By the end of KS4 more able students are improving the quality of their writing suitably. Descriptions of recent holidays and cameos on personalities from history such as Napoleon contain a range of tenses and more complex idiom. Presentation and length are good. The complexity of writing produced by higher attaining students is

satisfactory. A-level students write well and at length on an appropriate variety of prepared topics.

187. Students' progress in French and Spanish is satisfactory overall. However, at KS3 in both languages it is unsatisfactory. The pace at which higher attaining students develop their knowledge of grammar and acquire higher level skills in the areas of reading, writing, listening and, to a lesser extent, speaking is too slow at KS3 and, therefore, impeded at KS4. As a consequence too few students achieve the higher grades in their GCSE examinations. At the same time, lower attaining students and students with SEN do not receive sufficient support to consolidate basic knowledge in all four skill areas and have difficulty making up this deficiency in KS4. Girls make better progress than boys in both key stages, though the disparity is slightly less than that experienced nationally. Only one boy has continued to study a language at A-level over the last few years.

188. Most students, especially older and more able girls and boys, behave well and show respect for each other, their teachers and their environment. They work hard and with enthusiasm. However, at KS3 in particular, too many students lack the necessary self-discipline or confidence to sustain concentration and their poor behaviour too often hinders general progress.

189. The quality of teaching varies across the key stages. At KS3 one in five lessons is unsatisfactory, whereas at KS4 all teaching is satisfactory and over half is good. Teaching at A-level is good. Teachers are fluent in both languages and use the target language effectively. They set appropriate homework and mark students work regularly, often with suitable encouragement and suggestion for improvement. They are beginning to incorporate some ICT into their teaching programmes. They plan their lessons carefully to introduce a variety of activities in each lesson. In KS3, however, and in some classes in KS4, they do not provide a sufficiently wide range of graded activity to satisfy the differing needs of individual students. In the poorer lessons their expectation of their students' behaviour is too low.

190. The department is well led so that staff work as a committed and supportive team. They observe each other regularly and pool their ideas. They are beginning to use assessment information to influence their teaching. However, they have yet to develop medium and long term plans and set themselves specific, measurable targets to ensure consistent improvement in the progress of students of all abilities.

### **Music**

191. No data are available for last year's GCSE group and results are still pending. The school has not managed to obtain students' coursework from a teacher who has been on long-term sick leave. In this respect as well as in the teacher assessments for last year, the school has failed to meet the statutory requirements.

192. The standards in lessons are well below expectations for students of the same age, reflecting the lack of continuity in teaching and learning over the last year. The Y11 GCSE group have had a particularly disrupted time and most are performing well below the expected level for the course. In Y10, students can recognise chord sequences, and most can locate them on the keyboard using appropriate fingering. A few can manipulate them successfully as part of the compositional task. Their performing ability is limited by lack of instrumental experience or expertise.

193. In KS3, behaviour is disrupting the continuity of learning and Y9 is not attaining in line with national expectations. By the end of KS3 students can recognise simple rhythms, can play them, keeping in time and can vary them within the same time signature. They are more confident with a regular than an interrupted beat. They cannot hold a part against those played

by others and only a few are ready for ensemble work. Y8 students can pick out a simple melody on the keyboard with accuracy of pitch. A few can play reasonably fluently after practice. Y7 students can read simple rhythms and most can play crotchets and quavers in 4/4 time. They can keep a steady beat. Extra-curricular instrumental provision has only just been extended. Many students are very keen. As soon as they are confident performers, some form of band or group activity will quickly enhance the level of attainment.

194. There is little evidence of progress across KS3 and students in all three years are working on similar basic tasks. They need some continuity of experience in which to make gains in skill, knowledge and understanding. Within lessons students make progress when the practice time is sufficient for them to consolidate their learning and when feedback helps them to improve. In KS4 progress is slow but individual students do show improvement in confidence and fluency. Y10 students can already achieve at the same level as Y11 students in compositional tasks.

195. Students have mixed responses to their music lessons. Those who are new to the school (Y7) are well behaved and accept readily the newly established ways of working. In other years, behaviour is very variable and, although many students are well motivated, several in each class are too readily distracted and find it difficult to concentrate. The work at present is highly structured and students have few opportunities to show initiative or take responsibility for their own learning. They do, however, acquire some learning skills which are specific to music, eg, reading and writing notation. Most students, when given the opportunity, work well collaboratively and show loyalty to their 'team'. They are careful when handling instruments and most show respect for the equipment.

196. The quality of teaching is never less than sound and is constrained by the need to re-establish good behaviour and productive ways of working after a time of some disruption. The teaching shows good command of the subject and tasks are carefully structured to yield some knowledge of the rudiments of music and familiarity with technical terms as well as developing skill. Preparation is careful and thorough and learning objectives are clear. Because of the need to establish good behaviour, a restricted range of teaching styles is used and students have few opportunities to make decisions for themselves. Expectations are appropriate for the ability and experience of the students and the pace of learning is too slow and is affected by the insistence on silence which often involves a long wait. Standards of discipline are generally good, but at a cost of much musical experience.

197. The time for music at KS3 is well below the average. A well-structured curriculum is designed to build progressively on what students know and can do, although currently students in Y7, Y8 and Y9 are engaged in similar tasks. There are sensible plans to adjust the curriculum as Y7 continues through KS3. Resources have been built up from a low base and the department is now well placed to teach class music to KS3 students. Assessment procedures include some self-assessment by the students and are well designed to test what has been taught as well as meeting the statutory requirements. Currently the head of faculty is looking after departmental management in the absence of a permanent head of music.

## **Physical Education**

198. No examination courses are offered at GCSE or post-16. Students attain in line with national expectations or above them in just over half the lessons seen. They achieve most successfully in games and show good performing skills in volleyball and in basketball. By the end of KS3 students have good control of the ball and can vary their skills but they have very little understanding of game play. Most can swim and they develop coordination and control in gymnastic activities. Y7 show some good basic skills in gymnastics and produce a good range



of ideas. They observe quite well and a few students can use given criteria when evaluating. By the end of KS4 students have consolidated their games skills and, eg. in volleyball, they make good use of a variety of skills and their team members in sustaining lengthy rallies. They still, however have poor understanding of the strategic aspects of the game. Boys show good control of the hockey ball on a fast surface, but have little idea of how to set up an attacking move or of how to defend systematically. PE is optional in the sixth form. Here girls have some very good shooting and passing skills in netball and both boys and girls play football with energy and some skill.

199. Where standards are below expectations, relative beginners or the weaker groups, for example the non-swimmers were seen. In all years students' planning skills and their evaluating skills are well below the national expectation. This reflects the relatively little experience they have had in developing them. Students achieve well in extra curricular activity. School teams and individuals are successful in local and regional events and leagues.

200. The progress made by students is directly related to the quality of the teaching. Where good feedback is given, students understand what they have to do and why, and where teachers' expectations are high, students make good progress. This was most evident in Y7 when students were being introduced to new activities. Progress is unsatisfactory in some KS4 lessons, when the students play games with little intervention from the teacher. There is very little evidence of progress in students' understanding or in their planning and evaluating skills. Students do not often have the opportunity to score, officiate or coach, or even making their own decisions within the work and thus do not make much progress in taking responsibility or exercising independence.

201. Students' response is sound or better in all lessons and is good or very good in half of them. Students enjoy their physical education lessons on the whole and the participation rates are high. They are invariably well behaved and respond positively to the clear expectations which are set. They relate well to the teachers. Many are well motivated and work hard. When asked to do so, they can organise themselves quickly. They are reasonably careful with the equipment and are helpful in distributing and collecting it. They do not have many opportunities to make decisions for themselves or to develop independent ways of working.

202. The teaching is sound overall with a little unsatisfactory teaching balanced by some which is very good. The teaching is better in KS3 than in KS4. All the teachers have very good relationships with their classes and manage them well. They have good subject knowledge, particularly of the skills in the activities that they teach, but their knowledge of the requirements of the National Curriculum is less secure. Good attention is paid to safety issues and the organisation of students and equipment is efficient. The quality of planning varies from the thorough to the superficial and only rarely are different tasks planned for students of different abilities. However, because the teachers know the students well, they are able to direct their questioning carefully and to offer support to students they know will experience difficulty. The teachers give good practical demonstrations and use gesture and clear body language to help those whose command of English is limited. In most lessons, a limited range of teaching styles is used, although lessons are carefully structured to give a variety of learning activities. Most lessons are drawn to a close with a review of the learning which has taken place, which is good practice. However, few lessons begin with sharing the learning objectives with the students. The pace of learning does not always keep up with the pace of the activity and expectations are often too low. In the less than satisfactory lessons, teachers do not intervene to give clear feedback on how to improve and do not promote understanding of the activity. In these lessons the teacher's role is merely to organise teams and referee games. In the very good lessons, students are given the opportunity to plan and to evaluate their work as well as to perform and a variety of teaching styles is used.

203. The subject is organised in two separate departments, for boys and girls. The departments have to liaise to prepare a single department handbook and one development plan. Departmental planning is poor and the development plan does not relate to school priorities such as raising standards or improving teaching. The schemes of work do not cover important aspects such as teaching styles and differentiation. There is a need to develop monitoring of student progress and the quality of teaching.

## Religious Education

204. Overall, the attainment of students at KS3 is in line with the attainment of those of a similar age nationally. Within this there is a wide spread of attainment. A similar picture is found in KS4. In 1999 the GCSE examination was taken by 101 students of whom 58% gained higher grades. This is in line with national results, as is the percentage (96%) of students gaining pass grades. This represents a significant improvement from the previous year when, with the same number of entries, 36% gained higher grades. At the previous inspection, RE at KS4 was a new course, so no examinations had been taken. The wide span of attainment is shown in both key stages by the knowledge and understanding which students display, both in lessons and in their written work. By the end of KS3 some students have gained good knowledge of the different religions which they study. They are able to recall important events in these religions, and refer to beliefs, worship, holy books and symbolism. As well as learning about religions, they study issues such as Religion against Racism, Women and Religion and Moral and Ethical issues. Examples of these were seen in some well written work about apartheid, and about key figures such as Martin Luther King and Ghandi, which showed both understanding and a thoughtful approach. Other students work at a lower level with basic answers to questions showing limited understanding of concepts and events. At KS4 students focus on three religions – Christianity, Islam and Hinduism. Here some show knowledge of beliefs and customs of the three religions. They know about the festivals and worship and something of ceremonies, customs and beliefs of birth, marriage and death. Many have a sound range of subject specific vocabulary and some show understanding of theological terms such as forgiveness and redemption. There are variable attainment levels across the Key Stage, with some writing fluently and showing good knowledge, while others have only a basic knowledge of topics and produce limited written work. Students enter the school with varying experience of the subject. Many consolidate previous learning and develop further understanding. Overall, students at both Key Stages make good progress though, as with attainment, this is variable and some students make limited progress over time.

205. Responses to RE are almost always at least satisfactory and often good. Students participate well in question and answer sessions and in discussions. They share experiences of their own religions and are respectful of one another's contributions. A number volunteer to read aloud and listen quietly while others read. They show interest in the subject, settling well to written tasks and maintaining a good level of concentration. Students often offer help to one another with both reading and writing. They plan well in groups, for example, in discussing possible role-play. They take care with the presentation of their work. Where students' attitudes are less than satisfactory, they are generally restless and waste time. They make little effort with written work, and often leave work unfinished.

206. Teaching seen ranged from very good to unsatisfactory. Teaching at KS4 was particularly good, with 80% of lessons seen being good or very good. Good teaching is characterised by planning which identifies learning objectives, and aims to meet the needs of all the students in the class. Teachers have high expectations of both learning and behaviour. Explanations are clear and good questioning strategies involve all students in the class, encouraging them to share their ideas and knowledge. Good use is made of students' own religious experiences. A wide range of artefacts is used to develop students' understanding. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, subject knowledge is not secure so that teachers rely on textbooks and worksheets. Planning is limited and there are no clear objectives. Few explanations are given and little attempt is made to ensure that students understand tasks or the content of lessons. There is no differentiation to meet the needs of students who have learning difficulties or those who are at an early stage of the acquisition of English as an additional language. In these cases classroom management is weak, and students are allowed to chatter and remain off task.

207. The subject makes a good contribution to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Students are given opportunities to discuss their own and others' beliefs and an atmosphere of mutual respect is encouraged. Use is made of the teachings of different religions to emphasise aspects of spiritual and moral development. Students discuss ideas such as belief in God, sorrow and suffering, joy and freedom. They consider responsibility for the natural world. They look at the implications of religion and politics and consider how to counter prejudice. They have opportunities to discuss moral and ethical issues such as abortion, euthanasia and the use of nuclear weapons. Cultural development is well supported in the multifaith approach to the study of the World's main religions

208. The ethos of the department is good, reflecting the aims of the school as described in its mission statement. There is an acting head of department who is providing effective leadership. He gives good support to teachers when this is needed, and is undertaking monitoring of marking and of some teaching. Since the last inspection, work has been undertaken to develop the topics covered, with schemes of work and lesson materials. These include a good quantity of differentiated materials to address the needs of students for whom English is an additional language, and those who have special educational needs. The scheme of work is in line with the Local Agreed Syllabus and the contents of the subject meet statutory requirements. Appropriate targets have been set to continue these developments. Assessment is being developed based on the attainment targets in the syllabus but is, as yet, insufficiently detailed, although some opportunities for assessment have been built into the scheme of work. The hours allocated to teaching RE at KS3 and KS4 meet the recommended number of hours but there is insufficient time for the GCSE course, with students receiving only one hour a week. Some attempt is made to address this by starting the course towards the end of Y9 and by offering some after school sessions to those who wish to attend. This situation is unsatisfactory. As at the last inspection, there is insufficient provision of RE in the sixth form.

209. In addition to the Head of Department, a number of teachers from different departments undertake the teaching of this subject. As suggested at the last inspection, there are now two designated RE rooms which has improved access to books and resources, although non specialist teachers still have to teach in other areas of the school, so that books and resources have to be carried around. The display in and around the designated classrooms is good, showing information about different faiths and a range of students' work. Resources for RE are being developed. There is a reasonable range of books and videos, although there is still some reliance on photocopied sheets. There is a good and well-used range of artefacts. There is very limited use of ICT in the department, but there are plans to gather information about materials available with a view to developing this.

## **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

### **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

210. The team of 12 inspectors spent a total of 52 days in the school. This included 179 hours of direct observation of students' work: 265 observations including 191 lessons plus some form times and assemblies. Almost all full-time and part-time teachers were seen teaching, with most being seen on several occasions. A number of meetings and extra-curricular activities were observed. Planned discussions were held with all heads of department and year, and senior managers. A separate meeting was held with the chair of governors.

211. Inspectors looked at the work of many students, including all the available written work from a representative sample of students from each year and students with statements of SEN. Planned discussions were held with these students and informal discussions took place with many others. Documentation provided by the school was analysed both before and during the inspection. Before the inspection a meeting was held between the registered inspector and 10 parents. Separate meetings were held by the registered inspector with school staff, with the governing body, and with representatives of the school's community links. The inspection team considered 29 responses from parents to a questionnaire about their opinions of the school.

## DATA AND INDICATORS

### Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
Y7 – Y13	923	27	281	332

### Teachers and classes

#### Qualified teachers (Y7 – Y13)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	61
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15.1

#### Education support staff (Y7 - Y13)

Total number of education support staff	14
Total aggregate hours worked each week	406

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes:	76
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Average teaching group size:	KS3	22
	KS4	20

### Financial data

Financial year:	1998/9
	£
Total Income	2750376
Total Expenditure	2721400

Expenditure per pupil	2971
Balance brought forward from previous year	-429000
Balance carried forward to next year	-400024

## PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:	747
Number of questionnaires returned:	29

### Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	7	78	11	0	4
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	4	86	7	3	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	12	61	23	4	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	26	63	4	7	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	54	43	3	0	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	18	64	4	11	3
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	11	64	14	11	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	4	69	17	10	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	4	71	21	4	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	4	44	30	18	4
My child(ren) like(s) school	21	72	0	7	0

These parental responses represent only the extremely small sample of parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting and/or returned the questionnaire. Inspectors agreed with all the positive responses except with regard to work standards, where attainment is below national norms, though progress is satisfactory. Some behaviour needs to be improved. The provision of extra-curricular activities is not extensive although there is good provision for after-school classes.