

INSPECTION REPORT

THE ELLEN WILKINSON SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

LONDON BOROUGH OF EALING

LEA area: EALING

Unique reference number: 101941

Headteacher: Mrs S Parrott

Reporting inspector: Dr Barbara Hilton
3228

Dates of inspection: 15-18 January 2001

Inspection number: 197105

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	11-19
Gender of pupils:	Girls
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs S Pocock
Date of previous inspection:	29 April 1996

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The Ellen Wilkinson School for Girls is an 11-19 comprehensive foundation school in the London Borough of Ealing. It is very popular and heavily oversubscribed. Few students come from immediately around the school: nearly all travel from districts linked by tube lines to the several stations which are close to the school. The school is larger than most, with 1285 students overall, including 239 in the sixth form. The number of students eligible for free school meals, at 282 across Years 7 to 11 (27 per cent), is above average. The number of students on the school's register of special educational needs, at 339 overall (26 per cent), is a little above average, though the number with statements, at 12 (0.93 per cent), is below average for the size of the school. Sixty per cent of the students with the higher levels of need have moderate learning difficulties, 21 per cent have emotional and behavioural difficulties and the rest have a variety of needs. Overall, the attainment of students on entry in Year 7 is slightly below average.

Students are admitted from over 60 feeder primary schools and from a rich range of ethnic backgrounds, with the largest groups being Indian, Pakistani and white, each totalling about 20 per cent. Black students (Caribbean and African, together with some from other backgrounds) comprise a further 20 per cent and remaining students come from diverse backgrounds, including some refugees. Altogether 742 (58 per cent) speak English as an additional language, which is a very high proportion, with 121 (9 per cent) being at an early stage. Arabic and Urdu are the most frequently spoken home languages, followed by Gujarati and Panjabi. Sixty languages, in all, are spoken at home by students. The school benefits from special funding to help students learning English as an additional language.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The Ellen Wilkinson School is a good school with several excellent features. Its success is recognised in its status as a Beacon School. Leadership by the head and management are outstanding strengths, supporting the teaching which is consistently good. Standards at GCSE are well above average and they are rising at a faster rate than nationally. Achievement at GCSE is very high, relative to the attainment of students on entry in Year 7 and the large numbers learning to speak English. Sixth form results match those nationally. Bearing in mind the amount of money coming into the school, which is average, the good quality of education provided (teaching is good, with examples of very good teaching in most subjects) and the results obtained, value for money is satisfactory for the sixth form and good overall.

What the school does well

- Students achieve well in lessons and examinations: GCSE results are well above average
- Students learn well because teaching is good, with examples of very good teaching in most subjects
- Relationships and students' personal development are very good
- Learning support is an outstanding strength, including the help given to students learning English as an additional language, and the development of language through all subjects
- Excellent leadership, very good teamwork and support by governors generate a very positive ethos of success

What could be improved

- Accommodation limits opportunities in physical education, learning in some classrooms, communal activities and does not provide enough toilets
- Religious education in the sixth form and the use of 'thought for the week' in form-times

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Overall, the school has made good improvement since the last inspection in 1996. GCSE results have improved at a faster rate than nationally. The good standard of teaching has been maintained with more frequent very good teaching. More systematic use is made of assessment to monitor and review students' progress. Monitoring of teaching has improved substantially and results are reviewed across the school as a whole, with useful evaluation of achievement relative to prior attainment; detailed evaluation along similar lines is starting to develop in departments. Governors have worked hard on planning better accommodation, with success in many areas, although accommodation remains heavily used because of the high student numbers and there is little space for physical education and for communal use. Support for students learning English is much improved. Overall, timetabled time is used effectively although better use could be made of form-times. The school is well placed to improve further because of its excellent leadership, very strong teamwork and support by governors.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 16 and 18 year olds based on average point scores in GCSE and A-level/AS-level examinations.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
GCSE examinations	A	A	A	A*
A-levels/AS-levels	D	D	C	

Key

very high achievement A*

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

Students make very good progress across Years 7 to 9, by which time they attain standards in the core subjects (English, mathematics and science) which are well above the average nationally and very high relative to similar schools. Standards in mathematics were a little better than those in English and science in 2000.

Students continue to achieve well across Years 10 and 11 and their overall results at GCSE are well above the average nationally and in the highest 5 per cent relative to similar schools. The proportion of students gaining five subjects at the higher grades (A*-C) is above the national average, and the proportion gaining five subjects across the full range of grades (A*-G) is well above average; nearly all students achieve at least one GCSE by the time they are 16. At the end of Year 11, a good proportion of students achieve the Diploma of Vocational Education at foundation level, and accreditation of their computing skills. Results in most subjects are above the national average and results are high in media studies, art and information and communications technology. Students do not do as well at GCSE in music and physical education (for which a new syllabus is now being entered). GCSE results reflect very well on the progress of students with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language. Overall, literacy and numeracy standards are good by the time students are in Year 11. The school analyses results relative to students' ethnic background and students from the Indian subcontinent do particularly well at GCSE. Effective use is made of targets to improve results.

Results for A level GCE in 2000 were a little better than in the preceding two years, and broadly in line with the national average. Results in most subjects were above the national average, as, for example, in English, mathematics, biology, physics, art, media studies, Spanish and Urdu. Results in economics and business were below average. Standards are high on the business (advanced vocational) course and satisfactory on other sixth form vocational courses. A high proportion of students progress to degree-level or equivalent courses.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Students are proud of their school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Students are very well-behaved in lessons. Outside of lessons they are sometimes high spirited, even boisterous at times.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development is very good and sixth formers develop mature attitudes towards their work and others. Relationships are very good.
Attendance	Overall attendance is better than in most schools. Unauthorised absence is below the national average.

Students' very good attitudes and behaviour in lessons, together with their very good learning skills, help them to do well in lessons. They are interested in their work and persevere. Most students arrive punctually at school and are in time for their lessons. Relationships among all groups of students are very good, as they are with their teachers who give generously of their own time outside of lessons to help them with their learning.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 11-14 years	aged 14-16 years	aged over 16 years
Lessons seen, overall	good	good	good

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

Teaching and learning is good, overall. In 99 per cent of lessons teaching was satisfactory or better, in 84 per cent good or better, in 30 per cent very good and in 6 per cent excellent. Teaching is significantly better than at the last inspection and was unsatisfactory in only one lesson (out of 85 seen). Students' learning follows a similar pattern. They develop good learning skills, supported by their attitudes and behaviour, which are very good in lessons, particularly in the sixth form. Teaching and learning are consistently good in English, mathematics and science. Examples of very good teaching and learning occur in most subjects, particularly in art, drama, information and communications technology and physical education. Spoken and written English are developed well in all subjects. Numeracy is developed systematically in mathematics and students are helped to solve mathematical problems as they arise in other subjects. Good use is made of computers in most subjects, for example, in art, where computer-aided design is a strength. Teachers make very effective use of their subject knowledge to give clear explanations and help students to understand. They plan well, so students of all abilities are challenged and make good progress in lessons and through extra activities - for example, more able students produce the English magazine. Just occasionally a lesson does not build appropriately on students' interests and capabilities and they do not make as much progress as they should. This was observed only once, in music. Teachers manage their classes well so that students enjoy learning in a calm environment. Homework is set regularly and is often extensive.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is well planned and organised to help students do well at GCSE. The sixth form offers a good range of examination subjects and other opportunities, but too little religious education.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Students are very well supported. They progress and achieve well.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Outstandingly good. The systematic and thorough approach matches individual needs effectively.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good, through planned activities and the very good relationships in the school, and with strengths in social development and citizenship.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school is vigilant and caring about students' well-being but there are relatively few toilets for the number of students in the school.

Effective emphasis on English and support for students at an early stage of learning English are strengths: they help all students to learn well. A good range of GCSE subjects and well-planned vocational courses are provided up to Year 11. Personal, social and health education covers appropriate topics including sex education and drugs awareness as well as careers education, and work experience in Year 10. Religious education is provided throughout, with separate lessons up to Year 11, but the time allocated in the sixth form (where it is included in personal, social and health education) is not enough to meet requirements. Sixth formers have a good choice of A-level subjects alongside several vocational courses. They have opportunities to do work experience and community service. Shortage of space limits the enrichment curriculum, although sixth formers do participate in extra-curricular activities, for example, debating and physical education. Students' personal development is cultivated very well, particularly moral, social and cultural aspects; citizenship is emphasised well. Appreciation of the richness of cultural diversity enhances work in many subjects.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher leads very strongly, ably supported by senior managers. Teamwork is very good throughout the school, generating a very positive ethos of success.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The expertise of governors is well co-ordinated: they contribute very effectively to school improvement. Overall, they fulfil their responsibilities well, although requirements are not met for religious education in the sixth form because not enough time is provided, and for collective worship, as the 'thought for the week' is not used consistently.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Monitoring and evaluation are thorough and have led to improvements in teaching, learning and results.
The strategic use of resources	Very good, overall. Investment in English and learning support help all to learn effectively.

Strong leadership and a thorough, systematic approach to planning developments have supported improvements in many aspects of the school. Teachers, administrative, technical and other support staff all contribute to the friendly and very positive ethos of the school. The school makes very effective use of its available resources: the library, for instance, is very well used. Accommodation for communal use is cramped, as it is in many classrooms and for indoor physical education, limiting activities in these areas. Governors pool their considerable expertise to achieve the best value they can, for example, in buying-in services and agreeing contracts.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like the school. • Progress is good. • Teaching is good. • Expectations are high. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework, which is sometimes too much. • The information they receive. • The way in which the school works with parents. • Extra-curricular opportunities.

Overall, parents were well-satisfied with the school, in responses to the questionnaire and at their meeting. The inspection findings support parents' favourable views. Inspectors observed that homework was useful and mostly set regularly although sometimes it was very extensive. The way in which the school works with parents and the general information provided about the school are in line with most schools. Parents at their meeting said that they liked the full annual reports of their children's progress much more than the interim reports; the school might find it helpful to distribute an explanation of the grades (for achievement and effort) which are used on these. Meetings for parents about their children's progress are well attended and a good number (35) attended the last governors' annual meeting. The inspection found that a good range of extra-curricular activities is provided, including visits, special events, clubs and lunchtime activities, which are described in Newsletters to parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Students achieve well in lessons and examinations: GCSE results are well above average

1. Students achieve well at The Ellen Wilkinson School for Girls: overall results in the last three years for the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) have been well above the national average - and very high, relative to schools with a similar proportion of students eligible for free school meals. Results are better than at the time of the last inspection and the trend of improvement is better than nationally. Results at GCSE in 2000 represent good progress from the standards students attained at the end of Year 9. GCSE results are very creditable, when account is taken of the levels of attainment of students on entry in Year 7 (slightly below average, overall), the very high proportion learning English as an additional language and the proportion of students with special educational needs, which is a little above average. Overall, results of sixth form courses are in line with the national average: sixth form work is described more fully in the last section of this report.
2. Students achieve well in the core subjects (English, mathematics and science). By the end of Year 9, in 2000, students achieved results in National Curriculum tests in English which were above the national average, and well above average compared with schools taking students from similar backgrounds. Results in English had been even better than this in the preceding two years. In National Curriculum tests in science, in 2000, results were above the national average and in mathematics results were well above average; results in each were very high relative to similar schools. In 2000, GCSE results in English were well above the national average and in both mathematics and science results were above the national averages; results in each subject were very high relative to similar schools. Results in these three subjects have been similarly good over the last few years.
3. The majority of students enter about 10 subjects at GCSE and results in most subjects are above the national averages, both for all schools and for girls' schools. In 2000, results were particularly good in art, drama, media studies, geography and sociology. Results in information studies were well above the national average and much better than in 1999. Results were above average in design and technology and in history, and broadly average in French and German. The relatively small number of students who took GCSE in community languages (for example, Urdu, Arabic and Persian) did well: the great majority obtained results at the higher grades (A*-C). Results were below average in just two subjects: music, and physical education (in which the school has since changed the syllabus being followed). All Year 11 students have opportunities to gain the Foundation Diploma in Vocational Education, and accreditation in information technology (as a key skill) and they are very successful – a high proportion gains awards.
4. The school evaluates results carefully and makes use of monitoring information compiled by the Local Education Authority. In each of the three categories of ethnic groups used by Ealing (white, black and Indian sub-continent), students of The Ellen Wilkinson School for Girls achieve more GCSE passes at the higher grades (A*-C) than the average for maintained schools in Ealing; students from the Indian sub-continent at The Ellen Wilkinson School for Girls do even better at GCSE than the rest. The school monitors the progress of students from entry in Year 7 up to Year 9 and to GCSE and makes effective use of targets for raising results; in recent years targets have been exceeded. In all departments results are monitored and plans made for improvement. Approaches are being strengthened, with more comparison of results, to help students to do their best in all subjects.
5. Standards observed during the inspection were above average in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. The presentation of work is good, throughout. In English, for example, by the time they reach Year 9, students use a good range of vocabulary. Their written work is thoughtfully expressed and often based on good knowledge of the texts they are reading.

In mathematics, algebra is introduced early in Year 7 and by the time students are in Year 9 they are using formulae confidently and more able students solve simultaneous equations. In science, by the end of Year 9, students describe observations accurately and many are starting to link ideas – for example, between structure and function (in aspects of biology).

6. By the time they reach Year 11, students have good subject knowledge and analytical skills. In English, for example, they compare short stories effectively by selecting relevant points and express their ideas coherently. High ability students can make complex comparisons – for example, between the characters of Scout in *To Kill a Mockingbird* and Jane from *Jane Eyre*. Middle-ability students have secure knowledge of texts, although their written work is more simply expressed. Knowledge of books they have read is satisfactory among lower ability students but errors crop up more frequently in their written work. In mathematics, higher ability students in Year 11 have a good grasp of number and solve problems effectively – the most able can find the area under a curve by integration (which is exceptionally good performance). Students of average ability solve straightforward equations confidently and accurately, on the whole. While the number skills of lower ability students are good – they cope reasonably well with percentages and fractions - they find relationships (for example, explaining graphs and diagrams) more difficult. The standard of written work of Year 11 students in science is nearly all better than national expectations: there is little low attainment. More able students write balanced chemical equations confidently, handle calculations and express relationships mathematically (for example, about rates of reaction in chemistry and about energy and power in physics). Most students have a satisfactory understanding of the main topics required in GCSE. For example, they construct diagrams to show how living things depend on each other as sources of food and can explain changes in biological systems.
7. Teachers' well-planned and organised schemes of work help to ensure that students acquire a good foundation of knowledge and skills by the end of Year 9, which, as their understanding develops further, they use with increasing effectiveness and generally reach above-average standards. In art, for example, students have a good knowledge of basic art techniques and by the time they are in Year 11 they use composition and colour very creatively to express strong individual styles. Through consistent emphasis on discussion and using reference materials students learn to research, organise and evaluate information, reflected in above-average standards in media studies, history and religious education lessons. In geography lessons observed, learning was carefully planned and structured by teachers to help students to grasp key ideas – in Year 11, for example, about managing resources – and standards were above average. In design and technology lessons standards are just above average, overall. Good features include the presentation of design sheets, richness of design ideas and high quality of finished products, particularly in resistant materials and food. Work in textiles is neatly presented but shows less individual creativity. Standards in modern foreign languages lessons are broadly average, with higher standards in classes where teachers maintain consistently high expectations, as in a Year 11 German lesson on the topic of health and fitness in which students made good use of tenses, sentence constructions and a wide vocabulary.
8. In Year 11 music, students are attaining broadly in line with expectations. The music class is small and students draw on their knowledge of playing instruments to develop sequences and melody for compositions. Students' standards in physical education are wide-ranging. In lessons they are encouraged by good teaching and they generally learn well, but overall performance is a little below average. Standards are better with younger students, who are developing skills of observation, which help them to improve the quality and control of their movements. Lessons are sometimes curtailed by the need to clear the hall at lunch-time and the range of physical education activities offered is limited by the lack of space – this is inhibiting the development of dance. Students' evaluation of their own work helps them to do well in drama. In a Year 11 lesson, students achieved good standards of performance, both in scripted scenes and in activities they had devised themselves. Students have good computer skills, overall. Standards have improved substantially since the last inspection. Information and communications technology is used for a wide range of purposes and in many subjects. Desk-top publishing skills are particularly good. Standards on vocational courses are broadly in line with expectations in

business, and while lower than this on the travel and tourism course, the students following the course, who would mostly find GCSE geography too demanding, are making good progress.

Students learn well because teaching is good, with examples of very good teaching in most subjects

9. Both teaching and students' learning are good at The Ellen Wilkinson School for Girls. In 99 per cent of the lessons teaching was satisfactory or better, in 84 per cent of lessons it was good or better, in 30 per cent it was very good and in 6 per cent of lessons teaching was excellent. Teaching was unsatisfactory in only one lesson (out of a total of 85). Learning follows a similar pattern and enables students to achieve well. Teaching in English, mathematics and science is consistently good and there are examples of very good or excellent teaching in most subjects - as in art, drama, information and communications technology, sociology and physical education. Learning support, including the support provided for students learning English as an additional language, is very effective. Teaching, overall, is significantly better than at the last inspection, when it was unsatisfactory in 9 per cent of lessons and there was less very good or excellent teaching. General improvements in teaching have resulted from systematic monitoring of lessons and planning for improvements. Teaching is notably better in information and communications technology and business studies, and in the support provided for students with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language. At the last inspection support for English was a key issue for the school to tackle and now it is a strength of the school.
10. Students make good gains in knowledge because teachers use their subject knowledge and understanding very effectively in organising and presenting work. In mathematics and science, for example, students build on their previous learning and progress well. In a Year 11 mathematics class, lower-ability students were able to rearrange simple equations and use calculators and they developed systematic ways to decide which ratios (sine, cosine and tangent) to use in problems with right-angled triangles: their progress was good. Similarly, in a Year 11 physics lesson, more able students were prompted to recall and develop their earlier learning on magnetism at the start of a new topic as the teacher asked well-focused questions and used technical language precisely (for example, referring to the north-seeking pole of a magnet, rather than north-pole).
11. The use of language, including literacy, is well-developed throughout and is a strength (this is described more fully in later sections of the report). Handling numbers is systematically and well-developed in mathematics. In Year 7, lower-ability students have a satisfactory grasp of basic number operations; by the time they reach Year 9, they understand long multiplication and, by Year 11, they are handling percentages and numbers to three decimal places. At this stage, more able students use direct and indirect proportion when solving problems. While there is no systematic approach to numeracy across the curriculum, with the help of their subject teachers, students make good use of their mathematical knowledge in other subjects. The effective use of graphs, calculations and equations was observed in science; enlargement, patterns and symmetry in art; measurements and calculations in design and technology; databases in computer lessons; and analysing and presenting information using graphs and charts in many subjects, including those vocational courses.
12. Teachers plan effectively and provide challenging work, to engage students' interest and to move them on in their learning. In English lessons, consistent emphasis by teachers on the skills of writing, key points to include in a piece of written work, and checking to spot errors helps students to do well. Year 7 students, for example, made excellent progress in a lesson on descriptive and imaginative writing because the teacher led the students to work out improvements for themselves, after looking at sentences and the use of adverbs. In art, teaching is very good, even inspiring at times. A wide range of purposeful opportunities is provided, including work in two and three dimensions and screen-printing, a variety of which is displayed to good effect in the art rooms. Students have strong commitment to art and are encouraged to high levels of individual creativity throughout the school. Year 7 students, learning the basic elements of still-life drawing, were encouraged to bring 'something of their own' to their drawings of an orange. Year 9, working on patterns based on the ideas of William Morris, learned much about

balance and interlocking patterns by evaluating one another's designs. Year 11, in screen-printing, were highly creative and produced richly varied designs based on letter-forms. Sixth formers make effective use of computer software to develop and communicate their visual ideas.

13. Teachers take good account of the levels at which students are learning in order, to set suitably challenging work: expectations are almost invariably high. In history, for example, students develop reasoned understanding of complex issues, as observed in a Year 10 lesson when they were learning about the changing roles of women in twentieth century America; the teacher's probing questions prompted them to speculate about reasons underlying events. Teachers generally adapt work for students who work more quickly and for those who find tasks difficult and schemes of work, as in mathematics and science, show varied tasks for students of different abilities. Occasionally, in large classes where needs are very varied, the teacher concentrates on ensuring that all students understand the main lesson points and opportunities to stretch the most able are overlooked. This tendency was evident in some lessons in modern foreign languages (French and Spanish), where students made satisfactory rather than good progress in learning new words and constructions. On the other hand, when expectations were high, the teachers consistently used the foreign language and maintained a brisk pace, so that the students made very good gains in learning new words and listening, speaking and reading, as observed in a Year 11 German lesson.
14. Teachers assess work regularly using the school's own system and share with students the standards at which they are working. In several subjects, teachers inform students of their grades in terms of the National Curriculum – as in mathematics, art, and design and technology – but this is not always the case for younger students until they reach the end of Year 9 and is an area that could be strengthened. However, teachers monitor progress carefully. Students who are not doing as well as they might are identified for extra help and those who are gifted and talented are given more challenging work. Teachers regularly discuss with students the progress they are making and at the end of units of work set targets for improvement: the system is well used and appreciated by students. In several subjects - for example, drama, physical education and art - students are encouraged to monitor and evaluate their own progress, which supports their improvement effectively. In a Year 9 gymnastics lesson, students were helped to improve their own performance through observing one another's sequences of balancing exercises.
15. The range of activities and methods used by teachers is good. Practical work is regularly and effectively used in science, and in mathematics there is good emphasis on using and applying mathematics. Literature is well used throughout in English: for example, Year 8 students learned to improve their spelling, reading and writing through work based on *The Tempest*. Computers are well used. The curriculum for information and communications technology is well structured and supplemented by many realistic applications in most subject areas. Year 9 students, for example, design estate agents' leaflets making use of desktop publishing, and furnish rooms in a show house using software for modelling: the standards they reach are above average overall. The design process is well-emphasised through all aspects of design and technology. In a Year 8 food technology lesson, for example, students' evaluation of the sauces they had made by adapting a basic recipe helped them to understand the importance of colour, texture and taste. Students develop good skills in handling a varied range of materials – as in making small storage boxes with acrylic lids (in Year 9) and in fabric painting (in Year 11).
16. Teachers manage their classes very well. Relationships are very good and a strength of the school. The ethos for learning in lessons is purposeful, relaxed and friendly. Students bring to lessons very good attitudes and they behave very well on the whole. They persevere, try hard and work well individually and in groups – as observed in a very well-planned Year 7 geography lesson, in which small groups each prepared a short presentation on weather information. Relationships in religious education lessons are very good and support a positive, calm atmosphere. Students feel comfortable in putting forward their own views and contributing a range of experience, for example, about the types of ritual used to mark significant stages in life, enabling them to learn from each other and deepen their understanding of cultures and beliefs. Lack of interest by students is only occasional, and most teachers manage incidents well and cultivate participation, though during the inspection lack of interest was observed in music, during a practical activity

with Year 9 students which was based mostly on recorders. Use of a wider range of instruments (including the voice) could have been helpful.

Relationships and students' personal development are very good

17. The school's commitment to students' personal success, to recognising each person's worth and dignity, and to enabling students to become confident and self-aware, ready to take their place in society, is documented in its vision statement which is shared widely with all connected with the school. The school promotes students' personal development strongly through planned activities (in lessons and extra-curricular opportunities), and through the very good relationships in the school. Form tutors stay with their classes as the year group moves up the school; they know students well and guide their progress.
18. The timing of the inspection precluded observing lessons in personal, social and health education. In discussions with inspectors, students said that topics in lessons had helped them to understand issues which affect their well-being and also in making informed decisions about their futures. It is clear from documentation that lessons are well planned and provided throughout all years, covering topics in line with new developments in the National Curriculum. These include how to study and improve learning, careers and planning for your future, managing money, behaviour and what to do about bullying, as well as health (including sex) education and drugs awareness. The development of citizenship is particularly strong, with relevant topics covered in each year. At the time of the inspection, several Year 9 students were participating in the Magistrates Mock Trial Competition. A Mock General Election is planned to coincide with the time the government next goes to the polls. In May 2000, a Mock Mayoral Election was held to coincide with the election of London's Mayor. This gave students a chance to understand issues affecting people in London and to have their say about the democratic system; students' confidence in expressing their views was evident in lessons in all years.
19. Many opportunities are provided for students to take responsibility and develop social skills and they respond well: social development is very good. Form consuls include representation from all years and encourage participation in decision-making for the life of the school, and younger students assist in the library. Over the last year, an Environmental Committee has helped to decide on the landscaping scheme for the main school quad. The 'quad squad' of students has successfully supervised the creation of a stylish and very practical Japanese garden from a muddy patch. They exercised considerable responsibility and showed initiative in organising and directing the planting of shrubs and landscaping with a variety of paving materials, for the benefit of the whole school community. Meetings of the Amnesty Group, organised by students and supported by a teacher, regularly discuss issues of injustice and the plight of prisoners and participate in activities to express their concern. Students learn about society itself through work in several subjects – geography, history and sociology, for example. Their concern for others is evident through their willing support for charities, and they regularly assist at school events.
20. Students' moral development is good: they have a well-developed sense of right and wrong. The staff in the school present good role models. Guidelines for students on classroom expectations are displayed in form rooms. Students almost invariably behave very well in lessons. The general learning atmosphere is calm, friendly and purposeful, and all are happy to contribute. Students are trusted to remain indoors at break and lunch-times. For the most part, they respect the privilege of being in classrooms and behave well. Some choose to do their homework or attend an extra-curricular activity or seek help from a teacher. Students use the library well; this has a good stock of books, though it is small for the size of the school. In winter, opportunities for physical recreation are limited – there is neither a hard-surfaced play area, nor a large indoor communal space – and students can be high-spirited and even boisterous at times. Behaviour around the school is good overall. The number of students excluded for a fixed period is low. No student has been excluded permanently in recent years; the school does its best to provide for all students.
21. Students show very good respect for the faiths of others. Groups of students take it in turn to plan special assemblies with a religious dimension – linked, for example, to Diwali or the Chinese

New Year. During the inspection, assemblies on the theme of 'communication' provided opportunity for reflection and raised awareness of universal issues, for example, the need for consideration of ideas and actions. They were well received by students, overall. Form-time was provided on other mornings during which, generally, little reference was made to 'thought for the week' and while the time was mostly well spent – for example, taking the register and checking notices; however, in several classes students were noisy and achieved little. Requirements for collective worship are not met because arrangements for mornings when there is no assembly, the thought for the week is not being used consistently well. Good opportunities for reflection are provided in religious education lessons – as observed, for example, in a Year 11 lesson on marriage, in which students compared the values portrayed in popular teenage magazines with those of devout Muslims, Hindus and Jews. Displays and examples of work in art provide rich opportunities to reflect on other times and cultures – for example, through students' own work, and art movements, past and present. Students have opportunity to consider why literature studied in English has been influential and significant and (for sixth formers studying modern foreign languages) the literature of other cultures. In drama, physical education and music there are opportunities for appreciating the quality of performance and how it communicates ideas and feelings.

22. Development of students' understanding of other cultures is very good. It is largely implicit in the work of the school, the most important features being the very positive ethos which promotes equality and respect and the very good relationships within this diverse and harmonious community. Students are confident in stating their point of view and show understanding when listening to the views of others; they say they like the friendliness and diversity of the school. Discussions observed in history (on the changing role of women in politics), sociology (on the influence of childhood experience on future life style) and religious education (for example, on rites of passage) were well-managed by teachers and enriched the understanding of all. In several subjects teachers provide a good variety of cultural examples – for example, in practical art work, and in food technology. A varied and wide range of extra-curricular activities enhances students cultural awareness, including visits to theatres, art galleries and musical events. Horizons are broadened through residential visits, including field trips and visits abroad, within Europe and further afield, for example, to Malaysia.

Learning support is an outstanding strength, including the help given to students learning English as an additional language, and the development of language through all subjects

23. Provision for learning English is an outstanding strength of the school. Students benefit from generous time for English lessons in Year 7 and this is supplemented by drama, which is separately taught. Students with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language receive extra help – through subject teachers and, if their needs are pronounced, through extra support in lessons and tuition in small groups. Production of an English magazine provides extra challenge for students who write particularly well. Subject teachers, to an unusual extent, give practice in speaking and reading. The overall effect of the various types of help they receive in learning English is that students of all backgrounds achieve very good results both in English and in their other subjects at the end of Year 9 and GCSE.
24. Students listen well in lessons. They are confident in speaking, and while standards are satisfactory, overall, among younger students, they are hugely variable: some Year 7 students have a narrow vocabulary and are uncertain of sentence structures, while others express themselves accurately and well. By the time they are in Year 9, standards of speaking are good, overall. For example, in an English lesson, students experimented in small groups with the language Shakespeare uses in *Macbeth* to establish rhythms and pick out points for emphasis. Discussion is used very effectively to share ideas - as in a Year 11 history lesson about the economy of the United States of America in 1914, as well as to help students to progress - as in drama, where Year 11 students evaluated how their small-group performances could be improved.
25. Reading is satisfactory among younger students and develops well as they progress through the school. Subject teachers regularly involve students in reading aloud in all years – as in a Year 11

art lesson, when students were learning how to evaluate their work and they read extracts of evaluations compiled by students in other years. Students have a good grasp of technical vocabulary because teachers emphasise the meaning and use of key words, which are displayed in most classrooms. Reading is encouraged by regular use of the library; most Year 7 students exchange their library books several times in their first term at The Ellen Wilkinson School for Girls. Writing develops well. Students present their work well carefully in all years and thorough marking and correction by their English teachers help them to improve spelling and the overall accuracy of their work. Most Year 9 students use a good range of vocabulary in their writing and more able students organise what they want to say into reasoned, persuasive arguments. Less able students use simple sentences and their work contains more errors. By the time they reach Year 11, the standard of written work is good overall and the best writing conveys subtleties and is well adapted to its audiences. The writing of less able students generally shows satisfactory knowledge (for example, of literature in English) though answers tend to be descriptive rather than analytical. Subject teachers try to ensure that students have a good record of material covered, and often use writing frames effectively to help students to organise their ideas. Students are helped to learn to use text-books through regular reference to them in lessons – as in a Year 11 biology lesson when students were learning about cell division.

26. Support, both for students learning English as an additional language and for students with special educational needs, is very well led. The co-ordinators for these two aspects of support share a large and pleasant room known as “access to learning”, which is central within the school. They collaborate effectively and their strategies complement each other very well. Support for students learning English is essentially through all subject teachers, whilst for students with special educational needs an important element is individual or small group support. Additionally, separate lessons are provided for students in most need of help. Support in subject lessons is mostly in lessons of English, mathematics, and subjects making much use of language (for example, religious education) and it is provided in all years. Support for learning English and for special educational needs share several good features: record-keeping is good, teamwork and collaboration with colleagues across the school is very good, and students are helped to improve through systematic, thorough, approaches. The two paragraphs which follow focus on support for students with special educational needs because that for students learning to speak English is covered in a later section of this report.
27. Students make very good progress in learning support lessons, assisted by the teachers’ detailed plans to tackle specific needs. The students trust their teachers and try hard to improve. Their teachers help them to organise and check their work, using word-processors and dictionaries, as appropriate, to improve the standard of their writing. Exercises are used to teach about different types of words and sentence construction and students learn well from the practice they gain. The exercises for students with special educational needs are mostly paper-based: the “access to learning” base does not have computers on which up-to-date software can be used, for example, for teaching spelling or multiplication tables. Support observed in subject lessons was good: the support teacher made sure that words and meanings were understood through careful questioning and by dividing complicated tasks into smaller parts. Regular training for subject teachers, including the use of subject vocabulary, key terms and writing frames to help students learning to speak English, helps them adapt work for students with special educational needs. The effectiveness of this is evident in the consistent use of approaches across the school and the generally good progress students make in all subjects. Progress is reviewed half-termly and arrangements for annual reviews are properly in place. At the time of the last inspection there was not enough liaison between support and subject teachers: this is much improved and links with subject teachers are now good. They are well aware of the needs of individual students, which is an improvement since the last inspection, and meet every half term with the special educational needs co-ordinator to discuss approaches and the progress of students. However, practice varies according to subject as to how teachers record the way they are helping students to work toward their targets. The records kept centrally on students with special educational needs are excellent and provide an effective overview of progress across subjects and links with parents.

28. Students with special educational needs achieve well at The Ellen Wilkinson School for Girls. In 2000, just over 90 per cent of the students in Year 11 with special educational needs (of whom there were 42 in all, including one with a statement) achieved at least five GCSEs at grades A*-G and virtually all achieved at least one GCSE subject. These proportions are about the same as for all students nationally and reflect very well on the progress they have made and the effectiveness of the support provided, which is much improved since the last inspection.

Excellent leadership, very good teamwork and support by governors generate a very positive ethos of success

29. The school is very strongly led by the headteacher, ably supported by senior managers. Teamwork is very good throughout, generating a very positive ethos of success. As at the last inspection, there is a strong commitment to equality of opportunity, valuing and respecting individuals. These qualities are evident in the very good relationships throughout the school, the ways in which subject teachers often give of their time to help individuals and students' success in examinations. Planning for improvement is well organised and the overall school plan is reflected both in departmental plans as well as in arrangements for staff development. Leadership and teamwork in many areas is strong – as in the core subjects (English, mathematics and science), in supporting students with special educational needs, and those learning English as an additional language. Short, daily briefings allow staff to keep in touch with day-to-day arrangements. Commitment to the Investors in People programme has involved all staff in planning for improvement and staff development. Administrative, technical, catering and care-taking staff all contribute to the friendly and purposeful atmosphere.
30. The experience and expertise of members of the governing body is well co-ordinated by the chair of governors. They work closely with senior managers and contribute very well to planning improvements. They monitor and review the work of the school through their committee structure and through the regular information they receive – on results and the budget, for example. They are committed to the continuous improvement of the school and review their own contribution towards achieving this. Among governors a wide range of specialist knowledge is held – experts on educational research and assessment, finance, management, buildings, personnel and special educational needs augment the experience of parents and school staff. Governors are vigilant about the health, safety and welfare of students. A recent independent report commented on the very positive approach to providing a safe and healthy environment. Governors are very supportive of the school and proud of its status as a Beacon school and the ways in which staff, for example, in English and art, share and develop good practice with colleagues in primary schools, and disseminate good practice among teachers helping Somali students who are learning to speak English.
31. Annually, governors have reported to parents on improvement since the last inspection. Overall, good improvement has been made, with GCSE results rising at a faster rate than nationally and the generally good standard of teaching being maintained, with more very good teaching and almost no unsatisfactory teaching now. Good progress has been made in the key issues noted in the last inspection. Monitoring of teaching throughout and support for students learning to speak English has been much improved. Considerable investment has been made in information and communications technology with new computers and network facilities, which are effectively used. Governors have worked hard on improvements in accommodation. Several aspects of accommodation are still in need of improvement, however: the major weaknesses are the shortage of toilets, of indoor space for physical education and for communal use. At the last inspection, the time allocated for religious education in Years 10 and 11 was not enough to meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus and no religious education was provided in the sixth form. Since then, provision has improved and requirements are now met in Years 10 and 11 but there is still not enough religious education in the sixth form to meet statutory requirements. At the last inspection, time in assemblies and arrangements in form-times allowed reflection and worship but then, as now, requirements were not met because of uneven use of 'thought for the week' in early morning form-times. Except for these shortcomings in statutory requirements, governors fulfil their responsibilities very well.

32. Commitment to improvement is shared; consultation arrangements within the school are good. The school uses a wide range of information for monitoring its effectiveness, including examination results, attendance and exclusion data. Senior managers link with departments and effective systems are in place for monitoring teaching and the curriculum. Performance management arrangements are developing well: they build on systems already in place in the school, which has achieved Investor in People status. At the end of each unit of work (usually half-termly) teachers assess each student's work in their subject, using the school's grading system, and they set targets for future improvement. Students have a good sense of how their teachers feel they are progressing and in many subjects they monitor and assess their own progress, as a means of improving in lessons. The school has a good sense of its strengths and weaknesses: these are reflected in the priorities of the School Improvement Plan, which has anticipated developments in literacy and numeracy, vocational education and the new sixth form curriculum. The school has invested heavily in teaching English and learning support to help all students to gain access to the full curriculum. Collaboration among English and support staff, and staff development provided for all teachers in helping them include language development and reading in their own lessons, represent keen awareness of best value, as they result in students' good achievement. Governors have been astute in agreeing contracts to achieve the best possible results at an economic price, for example, in the building of the new classroom block and for financial services.
33. School finances are managed well. While, on an annual basis, planned expenditure exceeds income in this financial year, sufficient money has been brought forward to ensure no overspend, overall. Money for particular purposes (for example, special educational needs and English as an additional language) is used correctly. The school has been successful in achieving Beacon school status and has used this opportunity well to work and learn alongside others. Staff and learning resources are well used; accommodation is heavily used and more space is needed. The amount of money spent matches the income designated for the sixth form. Bearing in mind the amount of money per student coming into the school, which is average, the quality of education provided, which is good, and the results obtained, satisfactory value for money is provided by the sixth form and good value for money is provided overall.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Accommodation limits opportunities in physical education, learning in some classrooms, communal activities and does not provide enough toilets

34. The school is popular and heavily over subscribed. Numbers of students have grown, causing pressure on space. Since the last inspection the governors have achieved improvement in many aspects of accommodation, and these have significantly enhanced the learning environment, with new rooms for art and a new classroom block, and improvements in music, drama, textiles, the careers room and for learning support. Governors have also improved toilet facilities, and the fabric of the building by replacing defective windows. The improvements have been achieved within strict budgets; the new class-room block (L block), for example, has covered corridors and stairways but they are not fully enclosed. Nonetheless, further improvements are needed. For example, only a small number of science laboratories have been refurbished; most have worn and cracked benches. During the inspection, conditions were cramped in several lessons observed in humanities subjects, in science, computing and business studies. In these lessons, visibility for students was limited and there was little scope for group activities and movement around the room. However, the major problems in accommodation are the shortage of toilets and lack of communal space: the library, while well used, is small for the size of the school; the dining room is abysmally small; the physical education department does not have any suitable space for the teaching of dance. While the school manages to clear the hall (which is small) of indoor physical education activities, to extend seating accommodation for school lunches, there is neither any indoor space where students can congregate at lunch-times, nor any outdoor hard-surfaced play area; this is unsatisfactory. During inclement weather, opportunities for physical recreation are

very limited; while most students behave responsibly and talk, work or read quietly inside, a few are high-spirited and occasionally boisterous.

Religious education in the sixth form and the use of ‘thought for the week’ in form-times

35. Religious education is included in personal, social and health education lessons for sixth formers but little time is allowed for the subject so it is not studied to the depth expected in the locally agreed syllabus (mention of this is made in paragraphs 27 and 43). Students make regular contributions to weekly assemblies which provide an opportunity for reflection or for quiet worship. They devise and contribute substantially to the ‘special’ assemblies (held about three times each term) which usually have a strongly cultural and spiritual theme. However, students attend assemblies only once a week and on other mornings it is intended that the ‘thought for the week’ is considered in early morning form-times. In a few of the form-times, this was used well. Usually, however, little reference is made to this and opportunity is lost for reflection or quiet worship. Occasionally, in form-times little happened to reinforce the sense of community and the use of time did not provide a productive start to the day.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

36. *To further raise the standards of work and attainment of students the governors, headteacher, senior management team and staff should:*
- Vigorously seek ways of improving accommodation, particularly for communal activities and indoor physical education, and increase the number of toilets (paragraphs 27 and 34);
 - Increase the provision of religious education in the sixth form and the consistency with which ‘thought for the week’ is used in early morning form-times (paragraph 35).

Accommodation was included in a key issue of the last report.

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

English as an Additional Language

37. Support for students learning English as an additional language is highly effective: they are helped to learn English, to keep up with their work and to achieve in line with others in their class.
38. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is high: 58 per cent (a total of 763 students). Of these, 121 are at an early stage of learning English: 9 are just beginning to learn English, 20 have enough understanding of English to cope with basic every-day exchanges, and 92 are still learning to be fully conversant in English. Many of the rest (642) encounter occasional difficulties with literacy but they are essentially bilingual. Their backgrounds are very varied and over 60 languages are spoken at home. The great majority complete their education in British schools and their length of stay in England markedly affects their results at GCSE. For example, in 1999, when over 90 per cent of the bilingual students in Year 11 had completed all of their education in British schools, their GCSE results were in line with those for the school as a whole. In 2000, when the proportion completing their education in Britain fell by about 9 per cent, their GCSE results dipped to below the average for The Ellen Wilkinson School for Girls – though they were still as good as the average for all schools nationally. Detailed analysis is carried out on the progress of students from different ethnic backgrounds, both within the school and by the Local Education Authority, and this is used to target support for students learning to speak English. Significant numbers of students joining the school later than Year 7 are refugees from Somalia. The school has identified strategies to

accelerate their learning of English and has shared these with other local schools, through visits and staff development opportunities.

39. The support for students learning to speak English is outstandingly good. Subject teachers, throughout, make sure that students make sense of their work by talking with them and emphasising key words. Practice is provided to reinforce understanding, as observed in a Year 8 English lesson, when students made very good gains in learning new words, spelling and reading. Long words are divided into smaller parts, to help understanding. When support teachers assist the learning of individuals and small groups in lessons this is well-focused on the needs of individuals. For example, very good progress in learning in English was observed when the teacher made effective use of bilingual computer software to help Arabic students, newly arrived in England, to improve their writing; they kept up successfully with their class work and learned more English words. Key words with bilingual translations (for example, Arabic or Urdu) are displayed in many classrooms. Support teachers have good knowledge of the stages at which students are working and share the information with their subject colleagues. Relationships are very good. Students trust their teachers and are confident in trying out the English they are learning. Support observed for sixth formers literate in their own language, and still needing help in learning English, reinforced general rules about pronunciation and encouraged the compilation of word-books; the students made good gains in understanding technical words (for example, *exocrine* in biology) and possible double-meanings (for example, of *beanstalk* to describe a plant-part or thinness).
40. The co-ordination of support for students learning to speak English is very good. Strengths include the systematic approach towards improving language skills, and collaboration with colleagues supporting students with special educational needs and teaching English. Regular raising of awareness among all teachers has developed a consistent approach to providing students with opportunities to speak and read out loud in lessons. The students are comfortable in the school, mix well with other students and enjoy learning. The school provides opportunities for students to take GCSE in community languages and they do well – results are generally above average. The school's approach to working and learning alongside others, including participation in a local project to raise African-Caribbean achievement, work as a Beacon school and participation in developments at a national level, has sharpened awareness of strategies that are effective and given extra status to this area of work.

Key Stage 4

41. Students progress well across Years 10 and 11 (Key Stage 4) and in the last few years they have achieved GCSE results which have been well above the national average. Their very good results are reflected in the above-average standards observed in most subjects.
42. Teaching and students' learning are good throughout Key Stage 4. In addition to doing well in subjects continued from lower down the school, students learn well in subjects introduced as GCSE choices (for example, media studies and sociology) as well as in community languages (for example, Urdu and Arabic). The school provides, as option choices, vocational courses in business (at intermediate level) and in leisure and tourism (at foundation level): success in recent years has been good. In lessons observed, learning was good. In business, students showed good understanding of business concepts, such as retail trends, and drew on their own experience, for example, visits to shops and businesses; they tried hard to do well. In leisure and tourism, students made very good progress in organising a holiday, which involved reading timetables to reach destinations in Italy. Students were well motivated, and teachers used carefully-designed task sheets that helped students to organise their work. All students have the opportunity to gain a Foundation Diploma in Vocational Education, which is provided partly in personal, social and health education time and builds on a range of experiences – including work placements – and the great majority is successful. Similarly, the success rate is high for accreditation of information technology (as a key skill). Students with special educational needs and those learning to speak English benefit from support in lessons and also in 'option time'. Students receive good guidance on planning for their futures, including independent careers advice in Year 11. Usually the great majority of students stay on in education after Year 11 (over 90 per

cent) with a good proportion staying at The Ellen Wilkinson School for Girls (about 60 per cent). Overall, Key Stage 4 provision is well planned and successful in enabling students to do well at GCSE and to continue in education.

The Sixth Form

43. The sixth form in many ways is very successful. Strengths include General Certificate in Education at advanced level (A-level) results in several subjects, which were above the national average in 2000, as, for example, in English, mathematics, biology, physics, media studies, Spanish and Urdu. In 2000, results in both chemistry and geography were polarised, with some low, as well as a good proportion of high, grades. The only subject in which results have been low over several years is economics; however, now the advanced vocational course in business has been introduced and the style of learning on this may be better suited to the students. Students progress well in lessons and do well in the subjects they take. A number of sixth formers receive help in learning English, alongside their other courses. In the past, students have not taken extra examination subjects, for example, general studies, so overall results are broadly average. With the introduction of the new post-16 curriculum, all students are gaining credit for key skills, in addition to their other subjects, which will contribute towards their overall results from 2002 onwards.
44. Vocational courses are provided in health and social care and business (both at intermediate and advanced levels), leisure and tourism (at intermediate level) and travel and tourism (advanced level). This is a reasonably good range for the size of the sixth form. Students do particularly well on the business course (at advanced level): a good proportion gain distinctions and merits, the great majority gain qualifications and most of the rest gain units towards qualifications. Across all courses, a reasonable proportion of students gain full awards or units towards them, although in 2000 the success rate was not quite as high as in 1999. This was mostly because the school has an 'open-door' policy to entry into the sixth form and encourages students of all abilities to continue studying. These students include some joining the sixth form from local schools as well as students new to the country, who are learning English as an additional language.
45. The standards achieved in sixth form lessons observed were generally in line with expectations for the courses being studied, with occasional high standards. For example, Year 12 English students argued fervently and made good use of supporting material in exploring ambiguities in Katharina's character in *The Taming of the Shrew*; in a business (advanced vocational course) lesson, students drew on their own research into marketing strategies: they spoke with confidence and showed good insight into company procedures. High standards were also evident in sixth form artwork, where students were developing exciting and innovative work using computer-aided design and screen-printing.
46. Sixth formers have very good attitudes to learning and behave impeccably in lessons. They try hard and do extensive work in their own time and at home. Course-work prepared for examinations shows prolonged research and effective analysis to elucidate key points – for example, into the changing role of women, and the assimilation of Sikhs into British culture, for sociology. They appreciate the efforts of their teachers. In sixth form lessons teaching and learning was consistently good. Teachers' general approaches were thorough, systematic and questioning. They have very good subject knowledge and make students think about what they are learning, as observed in a Year 12 biology lesson on nutrition when comparisons were drawn between the dentition of humans, sheep and dogs, and in a geography lesson on the growth of suburbs. They continue to provide opportunities for students to develop basic skills – for example, in several lessons students were asked to read aloud and this helped to improve the speaking skills of students learning English, as well as the understanding of all. Relationships are invariably very good and students are confident about approaching their teachers to ask for help if they do not understand. Teachers are diligent in checking progress and students' understanding, for example, by asking well-focused questions, as observed in mathematics (for students retaking GCSE). Assessment on vocational courses is thorough. Expectations are appropriately high. In Urdu, for example, students who are competent in speaking and listening

are helped to understand hidden meaning by reading dramas, including comedy, and they make good progress in understanding the changing values of society through analysing characterisation in a wide range of Urdu novels.

47. Teachers plan and organise sixth form work well. The school takes into account students' preferences in planning the sixth form timetable, which customarily includes about 20 A-level subjects alongside vocational courses. The choice is good, including several languages as well as science subjects, media studies, sociology and business studies. The accreditation of key skills has been introduced. Students' personal development is cultivated very well, overall. Students are expected to take responsibility for their own work and have regular individual tutorials with their form tutors. Learning in lessons is extended through a variety of extra-curricular activities, including fieldwork, Young Enterprise and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, and a variety of visits locally to theatres and art galleries, and visits abroad. All students have personal, social and health education lessons which include careers education and an element of religious education – although this is not extensive enough to meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Every week a sixth form assembly is organised and these are effective, with opportunity for worship or reflection, but there is no requirement after the autumn term for students to attend early morning form-time, so opportunities are missed for reflection on the 'thought for the week'. Citizenship is developed well. Visits are made to the Houses of Parliament and students compete in the Bar Council Mock Trial competition. All students are encouraged to undertake local community service; those on vocational courses have work placements and others are encouraged to have work experience during holidays. Relationships are very good among students of all backgrounds.
48. The sixth form is co-ordinated effectively. A small sixth form block provides good study facilities and classrooms, but these are not used exclusively for sixth formers because of pressure on space. Students are respected as young adults and contribute much to the school – as prefects, through the school council and by helping younger students; for example, in paired reading and assisting teachers in form-time. At the end of the sixth form a high proportion of students, about 90 per cent, continue their education; of these a good proportion, over 75 per cent, progress to degree-level courses in higher education.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

85

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

39

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
6	30	48	15	1	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
	Number of pupils on the school's roll	1046
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	281	45

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
	Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	10
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	329	10

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	742

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	38
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	17

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	7.3
National comparative data	7.9

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	1.1

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000 (1999)	n/a	208 (207)	208 (207)

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Girls	160 (186)	169 (141)	153 (144)
	Total	160 (186)	169 (141)	153 (144)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	77 (90)	81 (68)	74 (70)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	36 (62)	53 (44)	39 (40)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Girls	170 (159)	179 (135)	181 (168)
	Total	170 (159)	179 (135)	181 (168)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	82 (77)	86 (65)	87 (80)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	46 (35)	51 (39)	62 (50)
	National	31 (31)	39 (37)	29 (28)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000 (1999)	n/a	207 (205)	207 (205)

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A* to G	1 or more grades A* to G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Girls	117 (129)	199 (198)	202 (199)
	Total	117 (129)	199 (198)	202 (199)
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	57 (63)	96 (97)	98 (97)
	National	47.4 (46.6)	90.6 (90.9)	95.6 (95.8)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score	School	45 (44)

per pupil	National	38.4 (38.0)
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Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number in their final year of studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	207 (205)	88 (92)
	National		n/a

Attainment at the end of the sixth form

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A-level or AS-level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000 (1999)	n/a	100 (77)	100 (77)

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	n/a	17.1 (14.6)	17.1 (14.6)	n/a	5.6 (7.2)	5.6 (7.2)
National	17.7 (17.7)	18.6 (18.1)	18.2 (17.9)	2.6 (2.7)	2.9 (2.8)	2.7 (2.8)

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

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number in their final year of studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	49 (38)	71 (81)
	National		n/a

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	90
Black – African heritage	66
Black – other	55
Indian	265
Pakistani	219
Bangladeshi	11
Chinese	17
White	285
Any other minority ethnic group	277

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	6	0
Black – African heritage	6	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	5	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	81.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15.8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	307

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	78.6
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	22
Key Stage 4	19

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	3,665,606
Total expenditure	3,669,256
Expenditure per pupil	2797
Balance brought forward from previous year	290,918
Balance carried forward to next year	287,268

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1285
Number of questionnaires returned	183

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	47	44	3	1	5
My child is making good progress in school.	50	43	3	1	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	43	5	2	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	44	44	9	1	2
The teaching is good.	41	54	1	1	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	28	51	16	1	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	44	44	3	2	7
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	33	3	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	29	51	9	2	9
The school is well led and managed.	42	44	2	1	11
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	38	49	4	1	8
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	35	42	6	2	15

Other issues raised by parents

At the pre-inspection meeting with the registered inspector, which 41 parents attended, parents were generally well-satisfied with the work of the school. Several parents seemed dissatisfied with the school's use of computers. The inspection found that this was generally good: facilities have improved markedly since the last inspection. A few parents also expressed concern about behaviour. While students were generally very well-behaved in lessons during the inspection, some tended to be exuberant and high-spirited at break and lunchtime, but no oppressive behaviour was seen. The school deals firmly with occasional incidents, which are reported. Parents also commented on the amount of homework set. While quantities are appropriate for the great majority, they are sometimes very extensive for students completing coursework.