

INSPECTION REPORT

BRAMPTON MANOR SCHOOL

East Ham, London

LEA area: Newham

Unique reference number: 102781

Headteacher: Neil Berry

Reporting inspector: Brian Evans
1049

Dates of inspection: 26 - 30 November 2001

Inspection number: 219400

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

© Crown copyright 2001

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

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Community

Age range of students: 11 to 16 years

Gender of students: Mixed

School address: Roman Road
East Ham
London

Postcode: E6 3SQ

Telephone number: 020 7540 0500

Fax number: 020 7540 0510

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Marion Faust

Date of previous inspection: 29 November 1999

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
1049	Brian Evans	Registered inspector		What sort of school is it? How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements How well are students taught? What should the school do to improve further?
10329	Brian Sampson	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) Students' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its students? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
8361	Malcolm Burley	Team inspector	Science	
27058	Kathleen Cannon	Team inspector	Special educational needs Media studies Sociology	
4372	Ralph Fordham	Team inspector	Religious education	How well is the school led and managed?
14490	Susan Jackson	Team inspector	History	
12121	Jack Mallinson	Team inspector	English	
29510	Nicholas Mayfield	Team inspector	Music	
25748	Roger Moyle	Team inspector	Physical education	
16950	Caroline Orr	Team inspector	Equal opportunities English as an additional language Modern foreign languages	
13067	Alan Quinn	Team inspector	Mathematics	
31680	Phil Redican	Team inspector	Art	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to students?

8682	Martin Trevor	Team inspector	Design and technology	
19983	Haydn Webb	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
10666	Patricia Wheeler	Team inspector	Geography	

The inspection contractor was:

Cambridge Education Associates Ltd

Demeter House
Station Road
Cambridge
CB1 2RS

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

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

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Students' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11
The school's results and students' achievements	
Students' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS TAUGHT?	13
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO STUDENTS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS?	17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	19
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	19
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	22
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	24
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	29

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Brampton Manor School is a mixed comprehensive school which serves a culturally diverse area in the London Borough of Newham. It has 1593 students aged 11-16, 833 boys and 760 girls, which is much bigger than the average comprehensive school. Students' attainments when they join the school are well below average. The percentage of students identified as having special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average and the proportion with statements of special educational needs is above the national average. A very high proportion of students, over a third, speak English as an additional language and just under a third of these are at an early stage of language acquisition. Nearly half the students on the school roll are known to be eligible for free school meals. This is well above the national average. Just over half of the students are from minority ethnic groups. They include significant proportions of students from Africa, the Caribbean, the Asian sub-continent and from Europe.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Brampton Manor is an improving and a much more effective school than it was two years ago. Through determined and purposeful leadership and management the school is now effectively promoting good behaviour and positive attitudes and relationships. It is beginning to see the benefits of this approach in the standards achieved by students. Improved teaching has led to better attitudes to learning and higher achievement. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Students' attitudes to learning are good and standards are improving.
- Assessment data are used well to identify priorities and meet students' needs.
- Provision for social and educational inclusion is good.
- The headteacher provides very good leadership, in partnership with a strong team of senior staff.
- Improving in teaching and learning through a well-structured staff development programme.
- Attendance is broadly in line with the national average.

What could be improved

- Improving students' skills in speaking and reading.
- Meeting National Curriculum requirements in information and communication technology (ICT).
- Raising standards in art, geography and design and technology.
- Improving provision for students with English as an additional language.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in December 1999, when it was judged to have serious weaknesses. Good progress has been made in relation to the key issues identified in the last report. The school is no longer judged to have serious weaknesses. Under the skilful leadership of the headteacher, good progress has been made in raising attainment and achievement. Management initiatives to improve teaching and learning are at the heart of this improvement. Good analysis of assessment data on student performance is used well to measure the impact of such initiatives. Major successes include the improved social climate, student behaviour, and higher attendance rates. Attitudes to learning are now good. The strategic development plan is clear and realistic. It includes a strong emphasis on raising students' achievement by fully implementing the schools' inclusion policy and effective teaching and learning methods. Recruitment and retention of teaching staff continue to present a barrier to raising achievement. In response, senior managers have developed a very good staff training programme for students and teachers new to the school. The school was fully staffed during the week of the inspection. The school does not comply with meeting statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship.

STANDARDS

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

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

Students' results in the statutory Year 9 National Curriculum tests improved this year in mathematics and science. The proportions achieving the expected level 5 were well below average and below average compared with similar schools. Results in English were, as in 2000, well below national and similar school averages. Results at the higher level 6 were well below average for the three core subjects. However, when compared with similar schools, results in mathematics in the higher level were average, in science well below average and in English well above average. In English tests, girls consistently achieve markedly higher results than do boys. In English, speaking, reading and writing skills overall are well below average. In mathematics and science, the differences in attainment between boys and girls have not been as significant. In these subjects in 2000, boys performed slightly better, while in 2001 girls' results were slightly higher. The overall trend in results in national tests has broadly been in line with the national trend over the past six years.

The average points score for students entered for GCSE examinations has been well below average over the past four years. In 2001, the average points score was average when compared with similar schools. The trend in the school's averages between 1996 and 2000 was below the national trend. This year's results show clear improvements in modern foreign languages, sociology, media studies, business studies and physical education studies. However, the impact of difficulties in recruiting specialist staff, particularly in science and English, was a significant factor as to why the school did not reach its challenging targets for the proportion of students achieving GCSE grades A* to C. Girls attained twice as many grades A* to C than boys. Standards are well below expectations and achievement is unsatisfactory in art, geography and design and technology. Overall, students are making satisfactory progress. They achieve well and make good progress in mathematics, science, French, German, dance, religious education, sociology, media studies and drama. Students' ICT skills develop well in ICT lessons but they are not well integrated into many subjects. Students with special educational needs make good and sometimes very good progress throughout Years 7 to 11.

STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Students respond well and are generally enthusiastic about the school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. There are occasional lapses but most students are amenable and courteous to each other and to adults. Staff and pupils work well together in dealing effectively with any incidences of oppressive behaviour, sexism and racism.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Students of all levels of attainment mix well and respect each other's views. Relationships among students and between teachers and students are good. The school encourages students to take responsibility, for example as members of the School Council.

Attendance	Attendance is in line with the national average. Unauthorised absence is higher than the national average.
------------	--

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of students:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

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 is better than in the previous inspection because senior staff have worked hard with staff to improve teaching and learning in all years. Teaching is a developing strength in spite of recent difficulties the school has experienced in recruiting specialist staff. It is satisfactory or better in all years. The improvement in behaviour, in and out of the classroom, has had a positive impact on both the quality of teaching and of students' attitudes to learning. There is some excellent teaching in modern foreign languages, drama and dance. In history, physical education, business studies, media studies and sociology, teaching is well informed and challenging. In mathematics, teaching is good in Years 10 and 11 and satisfactory in the lower school. It is satisfactory in all other subjects. Over time, teaching and learning has been unsatisfactory in art, geography and in design and technology. Classroom management is good in most classrooms; for example, all teachers begin lessons by making their objectives clear to students, pitch tasks at an appropriate level and finish by reviewing students' learning. As a result, the majority of students work well, develop sound study skills, have reasonable concentration spans and therefore make at least satisfactory gains in their knowledge, understanding and skills. Unsatisfactory lessons occur because either a small group of students hinder the learning of others in the class or the teaching does not consistently use methods that actively involve students in the lesson. Withdrawal and in-class support teaching for students with special educational needs is good, particularly in science and English. Teachers have a very good knowledge of their students and relationships are very good. Good use of individual education plans ensures that lesson content and resources are matched to the needs of the students. Provision for gifted and talented students is good. The teaching of literacy is well organised, includes a variety of approaches and support for students' needs is based on sound assessment data. However, there is not enough emphasis on developing skills in speaking and reading in many classrooms. The teaching of numeracy and mathematical understanding is generally good, although there is some inconsistency between subjects in applying numerical skills. The same is true for students' ICT skills. Support for students with English as an additional language is unsatisfactory because it is spread too thinly through the school.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Unsatisfactory. ICT provision does not meet National Curriculum requirements in control technology. There is no formal disapplication of students who do not study design and technology and modern foreign languages in Years 10 and 11. There is no daily act of collective worship.
Provision for students with special educational needs	Good. Provision promotes educational inclusion. There is a good partnership between support staff and teachers. The school's inclusion unit gives well-structured support to younger students with behavioural difficulties.
Provision for students with English as an additional language	Unsatisfactory. There is some good practice but overall staffing is not deployed efficiently and there are not enough specialist resources for those students learning to write English.

Provision for students' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Spiritual development is satisfactory. Moral and cultural provision is good. Social education is very good and students' personal development is enhanced by a good personal, social and health education programme.
How well the school cares for its students	Good. Students are valued and good relationships are fostered. Guidance for students is good. Assessment arrangements are very good and are used effectively to monitor and support student progress.

There is a good range of extra-curricular activities. Close and useful links exist with the local community. Procedures for child protection are good. Attention to health and safety is satisfactory. Parents believe that the school is improving and is making stronger links with them.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher provides very good leadership in the school. He has established a strong team of senior managers who are working well with all staff to provide a good quality of education for students of all levels of attainment. The effectiveness of middle managers is satisfactory overall but varies from very good to unsatisfactory.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors have a high level of commitment to promoting the school's interests. However, statutory requirements are not met in all subjects.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. Senior managers evaluate and regularly analyse across all aspects of the school. The results provide the basis for strategic development plans and priorities for improvement in the school's curricular provision.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Governors ensure that their spending decisions are well taken. Specific grants are being used appropriately and well. 'Best value' principles are applied to academic success and spending.

The school approaches the difficulties in appointing suitably qualified staff imaginatively but the situation is affecting standards and achievement of many pupils. Learning resources are adequate. Accommodation has improved significantly since the last inspection but for subjects such as physical education facilities are cramped or inadequate.

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 school. • Their children make good progress. • They feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. • The school expects their children to work hard and achieve their best. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school working more closely with parents. • Homework. • Information about how their children are getting on at school

Inspection findings support parents' positive views about the school. Inspectors found inconsistencies in the setting of homework but generally the homework set by teachers enhances students' learning. Inconsistencies arise when teachers do not set homework at the appropriate time and so students find that they have several subject homeworks to complete on the same evening. The pastoral staff work

closely with parents. Written reports on progress are at least satisfactory and often good. Teachers, including the headteacher and senior staff, are easy to approach. Parents believe that behaviour has improved significantly in the school over the past two years and fully support teachers in ensuring that students do not go out of school at lunchtime.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and students' achievements

1. Overall, attainment of students on entry to the school is well below average. The attainment profile of all years changes over time because a significant number of students enter or leave the school at different times in the school year. In 2000, attainment of students in National Curriculum tests at the age of 14 was well below average in English and mathematics. Results in science national tests in 2000 were in the lowest 5 per cent of schools nationally. In English, average points scores per student compared with schools in similar contexts were average and well above average for those attaining higher levels. In mathematics, they were average and in science well below average compared with similar schools. The trend, during the period 1996-2001, in the school's average score for all core subjects was broadly in line with the national trend. The 2001 test results show that overall standards are improving by the end of Year 9 despite severe staffing difficulties. Results in mathematics and science showed significant gains from 2000. In English, standards have been sustained over the two years.
2. The proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE A* to C grades in 2000 was well below average but above the average of a group of schools where the candidates all had similar results in the Year 9 tests in 1998. Girls attained twice as many grades A* to C than boys. The proportion achieving one or more GCSE grades A* to G was close to the average and well above the results of similar schools. Students' GCSE average points score was above average in comparison with similar schools. The trend in the school's averages between 1996 and 2000 was broadly in line with that nationally.
3. In English language and English literature, GCSE results are well below average and show a small downward trend. However, a higher proportion of students achieved the higher grades in 2001. There are significant differences between boys' and girls' results in English. Low levels of literacy, particularly among boys, are being addressed well in all curriculum areas through the literacy group which includes representatives from all subject areas. In mathematics, GCSE results are well below average but rose slightly in 2001 and are improving. Science GCSE results were below average in 2001 and, overall, were similar to those in 1999 and 2000. Difficulties in recruiting science teachers adversely affected GCSE results in 2001. GCSE targets based on the LEA's analysis and expectations of the Year 11 cohort present a clear challenge to staff. The school narrowly missed its GCSE targets for 2001 but inspection evidence indicate that improvements in teaching and learning since the last inspection is leading to higher attainment in all year groups.
4. In art and in design and technology, GCSE results measured against the national average were very low in 2001 and lower than in 2000. Boys performed poorly in art. In geography, GCSE results were well below average. In history, GCSE results for 2000 and 2001 were below average, with girls performing significantly better than the boys. French and German GCSE results were below average but show an upward trend. Students generally achieved better GCSE grades in languages than in most of their other subjects and the gap in performance between boys and girls was less than average. In physical education, GCSE results in 2001 were in line with the national average results and showed massive improvement over those of 1999 and 2000. GCSE results in drama are average and have consistently been among the best in the school. Results in media studies and sociology are improving and in 2001 were above average. Standards are below average in business studies but there has been a steady improvement over the past two years.
5. In the last inspection two years ago, students' progress was judged to be better in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 7 to 9. Inspection evidence indicates that this gap has narrowed because the school is implementing effective strategies for improving the quality of teaching and learning in all years. The headteacher and senior managers have also worked hard to implement an effective

inclusion policy and work towards meeting the needs of all groups of students. Their initial priorities on improving behaviour and developing teachers' classroom management skills have led to much better attitudes to learning and higher achievement. Students in Years 7 to 9 make satisfactory progress in English, history, ICT, music and physical education. They achieve well and make good progress in mathematics, science, French, German, dance, religious education and drama. Achievement in art and in design and technology is well below national expectations because students make little progress in developing their basic skills in these subjects. In geography, achievement is also below national expectations because students have difficulty in writing accurately.

6. Students in Years 10 and 11 make satisfactory progress in English, history, ICT, music, physical education, business education and religious education. Students of all attainment levels achieve well in mathematics and build on their earlier knowledge and understanding in the lower school. Higher attainers in science achieve well: progress for lower attainers is more often satisfactory rather than good because they find difficulty with the written work. Achievement in art is poor because much of the students' work is tentative and unambitious. Students make unsatisfactory progress in design and technology and in geography for much the same reasons as in Years 7 to 9. Students achieve well and make good progress in languages, dance, media studies and sociology mainly because skilful teaching ensures that lessons meet the needs of students of all levels of attainment. In drama all students, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make very good progress because teaching is often very good or excellent.
7. The arrangements introduced for supporting students' literacy skills are very good and are generally consistently applied in all subject areas. However, many students enter the school with very low literacy skills. Senior staff give an appropriately high priority to meeting individual needs, particularly in reading and writing. They use assessment data well to monitor progress and support groups of students. However, low literacy levels continue to be a barrier for many students in striving for higher test results and GCSE grades. Skills in numeracy are also below average. The school has begun to implement the National Numeracy Strategy in Years 7 to 9. There were few examples seen, other than in mathematics, of teachers planning opportunities for students to apply their numerical skills. ICT skills are developed well in Year 7 but in other years standards are patchy. Students have access to the Internet and make good use of the computer facilities in their own time. However, a number of subjects are in the early stages of integrating ICT into their planning. For example in science, students do not have the opportunity to see how a computer can be used to directly collect information from experiments through sensors.
8. The planning and implementation of inclusive education for most students are good. The attainment of the majority of students with special educational needs is well below average on their admission to the school. However, within their ability levels they make good and sometimes very good overall progress as they rise through the school. By the age of 14, most students with severe and moderate learning difficulties have developed basic literacy and numeracy skills, which they further develop through the use of word processors. Mixed year groups with speech and language difficulties participate well in the local education authority's signing scheme, which promotes their ability to communicate using signs and speech and also supports their personal and social development. In Years 10 and 11, the students are encouraged to work towards GCSE examinations if appropriate. However, the majority follow a life-skills programme towards bronze and silver accreditation awards.
9. Overall, the high proportion of students for whom English is an additional language make unsatisfactory progress because support is spread too thinly across the school and their needs are not met well. Support for newly arrived students with very little or no English is not provided early enough. Some subject teachers have very little specialised material to cater for these students' needs.
10. The gifted and talented students are well served by the school. Higher attainers are identified early in their school career and achieve well. Departments identify students who are gifted and talented and set them targets which are written into their diaries. High attainers work hard, show

keen interest and achieve well. In mathematics and science, for example, high attainers are set extension work and participate in events such as the 'physics challenge'. The wide range of extra-curricular activities involves a high proportion of students and provides them with excellent opportunities to develop their talents in the fields of music, drama and physical education.

Students' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Overall, students have good attitudes toward their school. The majority of them are enthusiastic in their learning whether following a physical or mental task. For example, the former was most evident from the observation of a physical education lesson involving Year 8 in hockey training. The students were so interested, involved and motivated that it was obvious they had a real desire to improve every aspect of their performance.
12. Behaviour is mostly good. In lessons it is often very good and occasionally excellent. This was most evident when a Year 7 English lesson on library skills entailed placing lists of authors' names in alphabetical order. The students worked away in a productive manner, only stopping to discuss a point with their neighbour. However, in and around the school and particularly at changeover between tutorials, behaviour is not always as commendable.
13. Although the school has previously had a very high level of exclusions, these have been reduced significantly. There have been no permanent exclusions this year. During discussions with groups of students, from all years, it was particularly noticeable how well the majority differentiated between genuine bullying and simply friends falling out. Most of them also agreed that bullying, as it used to be, is mostly a thing of the past at the school. The school maintains a racial incidents book but has not needed to use this for some considerable time. No indications of sexism were witnessed during the inspection. Students understand the impact of their actions upon others. They realise that one negative action only breeds others. This is an important part of the school's ethos.
14. Relationships are good. With so many varieties of ways of life in the school all the students have an innate understanding of each other. They have respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others. From all groups of students spoken to, every individual agreed that he or she had good friends in the school and they thought that the tutors were some of the best people that they had ever met. The school's very good personal, social and health education ensures that most of the students are developing into responsible citizens.
15. Attendance has risen considerably since the previous inspection and is now in line with the national average for comprehensive schools. However, unauthorised absences remain above the national average. Most students come to school on time and the majority of lessons begin promptly.
16. Overall, the attitudes, values and personal development that the students display enhance their learning considerably.

HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS TAUGHT?

17. Teaching is a developing strength and makes a positive contribution to effective learning and to the standards achieved. Overall, teaching is satisfactory through the school. Teaching was satisfactory or better in 93 per cent of the lessons seen, good or better in 56 per cent and very good or better in 21 per cent. Seven per cent of the teaching was excellent, six per cent unsatisfactory and one per cent poor. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection two years ago when 16 per cent of lessons seen were considered to be less than satisfactory. A much higher proportion of students is now making satisfactory or better progress. The improved quality of teaching and learning is recognised by the parents. The relatively few unsatisfactory or poor lessons occur because either a small group of students hinders the learning of others in the class or the pace of learning is not matched to students' attainment levels.

18. Teaching is satisfactory in English, science, design and technology, geography, ICT, music and religious education. It is good in history, physical education, business studies, media studies and sociology. Teaching in these subjects is well informed and challenging. In mathematics, teaching is good in Years 10 and 11. It is satisfactory in the lower school where the school has had to deploy non-specialist mathematicians to teach some classes. French and German are taught well and teaching is occasionally excellent. The best and most successful language lessons include very carefully pitched activities that develop the speaking and listening skills of all students. In drama and in dance, teaching is very good overall and often excellent. Pupils of all attainment levels in both subjects are keen to learn and achieve high standards. From examination of artwork in the school and in the light of students' poor achievement, it is judged that teaching and learning are unsatisfactory in all years in art. Many tasks are uninspiring and boring. However, the art teaching observed during the inspection was at least satisfactory.
19. In the last two years, the headteacher and senior management team have placed a high priority on improving behaviour in classrooms and around the school. The improvement in behaviour has had a major impact on both the quality of teaching and students' attitudes to learning. In addition, and as a response to the severe difficulties in recruiting and retaining teachers, senior managers have established a good staff development programme. A key element has been a strong framework for monitoring and supporting good classroom practice. For example, all teachers begin lessons by making their objectives for the lesson clear to students and most, but not all, end by reviewing students' learning at the end of the lesson. As a result, most students of all attainment levels work harder, develop good study skills and make considerable gains in their understanding and skills.
20. However, there are weaknesses. In many otherwise satisfactory lessons, the teaching does not always respond sufficiently to the different needs of students. Teachers do not consistently use methods that actively involve students in the lesson. In some classrooms, this lack of variety in teaching approach is related to a lack of appropriate materials and practical resources, which limits the development of independent investigation skills. ICT is well taught in specific ICT lessons where the specialists provide challenging and well-designed activities that enable students to be actively involved and develop a wider understanding of the different applications. In many other subjects, the use of ICT is still limited as a teaching tool. In many classrooms there needs to be a greater emphasis on speaking and reading.
21. Homework is used effectively in a few subjects to support students' learning. Overall, it is set satisfactorily but there are inconsistencies between teachers and between subjects. Marking of students' work is also sometimes good but again there is some inconsistency in practice. In some subjects, such as modern foreign languages and English, marking is conscientiously and regularly completed but such good practice is not widespread across all subjects.
22. The standard and quality of withdrawal and in-class support teaching for students with special educational needs are good, particularly in science and English. Teachers have a very good knowledge of their students and relationships are very good. Good use of individual education plans ensures that lesson content and resources are matched to the needs of the students. For example, explanations of the meanings of key vocabulary are reinforced through discussion and targeted question and answer sessions before written exercises are set. Teachers make good use of hands-on resources to promote and retain the students' interest and concentration. For example, they were captivated when listening to and identifying bird sounds and eager to begin their design and creation of a bird-table and seed-cakes in design and technology. The students respond with positive enthusiasm to the teachers' realistic challenge and expectations of good behaviour. This is reflected in the students' work and they make good progress over time. For example, they develop their eye and hand co-ordination from using a pen to writing single words or constructing simple sentences and, sometimes, short paragraphs. They have a basic knowledge of addition and subtraction and successfully work with two-digit numbers. Some students, with support, use desktop publishing programmes to develop their presentational skills.

23. The recently restructured Brampton Inclusion Unit (BIC) provides strong support to those students aged up to 14 who have behavioural difficulties and have been temporarily excluded from lessons. One-to-one interviews allow them the time to consider their behaviour and resolve for themselves how they could have managed a situation more effectively and without conflict. They make good progress, often returning to lessons within 20 minutes and volunteering an apology to the class teacher for the poor behaviour. Some students receive regular timetabled lessons at the centre, and there is evidence in their work that they make good gains in literacy, numeracy and science. For example, in science, they estimate and investigate how sound vibration travels, working in pairs to record their findings. In mathematics, the students extend their knowledge of area and measurement by planning and creating a vegetable garden. The quality of teaching within the centre is good, overall. One unsatisfactory lesson was observed and this was due to the teachers' inadequate consideration of health and safety issues.
24. Within the education inclusion programme, good quality support teaching strongly promotes the students' social, cultural and moral development. Supporting teachers have a very good knowledge of their students and relationships are very good. Where the subject teacher makes good provision for students with additional needs, it is often difficult to identify them because they are totally included within the lesson. For example, the students on the autistic spectrum and those with Downs Syndrome make excellent progress in dance. They participate very well alongside their peers in a range of demanding physical activities, demonstrating their earlier learning by keeping in sequence, time and rhythm. However, in some subjects such as mathematics, little consideration is given to catering for differing abilities and students with special needs fail to make progress because resources and texts are inappropriately matched to their needs.
25. The needs of gifted and talented students are met through planned extension work. For example, in media studies, where students were comparing changes in family life, higher achievers extended their work by a written analysis of the causes of the changes.
26. Senior staff have set up a high profile literacy group to provide subject staff with advice and practical activities on teaching literacy. Assessment data are used well to identify groups of students in need of additional support. A number of initiatives has enabled a more consistent approach to developing students' literacy skills. Students benefit greatly from, for example, book boxes for tutor groups, paired reading schemes and good access to learning resources in the library.
27. The teaching of numeracy and mathematical understanding is generally good, although there are inconsistencies within the department and across the school. Some subject teachers are more effective in developing these basic skills. The subjects include physical education, geography, design and technology and ICT in aspects such as data-handling and measurement. In mathematics, lessons have been positively influenced by the National Numeracy Strategy with activities that have built on earlier work in middle and primary schools. The good lesson activities ensured that students were well motivated and helped to develop their basic skills.
28. Most students with English as an additional language have satisfactory learning skills. However, support for students at an early stage of language development is unsatisfactory.

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

29. The quality and range of opportunities for learning are satisfactory. The school is making the most of its resources to provide a curriculum that is appropriate for its students. Since the previous inspection the school has reorganised the structure of the school day. This has increased teaching time in the morning session, and allowed more flexible grouping of students in subject areas. Various ways of raising boys' achievement have also been introduced. These include providing more practical work and discussion, setting individual targets and using praise to

encourage positive behaviour. The school has also increased the hours allocated to teaching to meet the minimum DfES recommendation. This has affected music because lack of regular time to practice skills means that achievement is limited to a satisfactory level. In most subjects for example, English, mathematics and science, the opportunities for learning are good, and work is well planned and organised. However, shortcomings in the provision in design and technology and ICT mean that the quality and range of learning opportunities in these subjects is unsatisfactory.

30. Design and technology and information and communication technology do not meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. This is because in Year 10, half of the students do not study design and technology. This is due to staffing difficulties, because the school has not been able to appoint enough suitably qualified teachers in the subject. This is in spite of the great efforts made to try to recruit more staff. The school currently offers the subject as an option, and all those who wish to study it can do so, and receive teaching from subject specialists. In information and communication technology, students are not able to use a computer to monitor and control systems, as required by the National Curriculum. In addition, although in Year 7 there is good planning, which ensures high standards, in Year 8 the planning does not cover all it should. In all other years, planning is not detailed enough, and this makes monitoring of students' work difficult, which contributes to the unsatisfactory progress made in this subject.
31. In addition to the students who do not study design and technology in Year 10, there are approximately 40 students who do not study a modern language in Years 10 and 11. None of these students has been formally disapplied from following the National Curriculum, as the regulations require.
32. A good programme of personal, health and social education (PSHE) is taught by form tutors. It covers a broad range of topics including personal development, citizenship, bullying, relationships and drugs and also includes the governors' agreed sex education policy. There is provision for self assessment, review and action planning, which is well structured and challenging. The PSHE lessons seen during the inspection were mostly satisfactory and sometimes good or very good. Students' response was good, overall, and this was also reflected in views expressed by students during the student interviews.
33. The provision for extra-curricular activities is good. The school has recently improved its provision, especially during lunchtimes. This is part of a development to ensure students' safety, by keeping them on school premises, and helping raise achievement by using the time productively. These activities include a wide range of study clubs in school subjects for example, 'springboard' mathematics in Year 7, to improve numeracy skills. There is also open access to the library, which is well used, and has a busy and productive atmosphere at lunchtime. In drama, extra-curricular provision is very good, with a wide range of opportunities to visit theatres and local Schools. There are links with a professional theatre company, and students have performed publicly in the Millennium Dome. Students also regularly contribute to assemblies in the school. In physical education provision is good, and up to one-third of students regularly take part in activities outside school time. The school's teams and individual students are regularly successful at borough, county and sometimes national level in, for example, football, cricket and hockey. In addition, one student played cricket for the England school team last year.
34. Provision for work-related education, including careers education and guidance, is good. This is provided in liaison with the local careers service, with a careers officer dedicated to the school for two days each week. This means that group and individual careers interviews can be provided for students in Years 10 and 11. Students who are expected to achieve GCSE results at grades C to G all receive individual interviews and careers action plans. However, students who are expected to gain higher grades at GCSE do not all receive individual interviews, owing to lack of time, though the school does its best to ensure that as many as possible receive this service. In Year 9, careers education is provided by form tutors in a module of work which is well organised and forms an effective introduction to this area. There is an extensive range of initiatives and visits, which involve students in the work-related curriculum. These include special days designed to raise students' awareness of access to employment, and to the opportunities for employment in the locality. The programme also gives them opportunities to experience making job applications

and attending interviews. Students respond well to this programme, and feel that it is very useful for their future. In addition, students complete a two-week work experience placement during Year 10.

35. Since the previous inspection, the school has established a careers office, which is well stocked with careers and employment information. This information is well presented and up to date, and easily accessible to students at lunchtimes on an informal basis.
36. The school has very good links with the community. These links are a strength of the school and contribute considerably toward the students' learning. A local building company is gradually landscaping all of the school's open quadrangles with plants and walkways. At Christmas groups of students visit the local hospital and entertain with singing and instrumental events. School facilities are well used by the community. For example, the fine Astro-Turf sports pitch is well sought after and recently the school has set up a 'Parents on Line' session to encourage parents to come in and learn computer skills. The school is never short of local firms offering work experience placements for the older students.
37. The school also has very good relationships with other schools and colleges. These relationships are another of the school's strengths and they have a very direct and positive effect upon the way in which the students learn. Currently there are 37 partner primary schools and the staff liaise efficiently to ensure a smooth transfer of their Year 6 students. The same efficient transfer procedures apply to post-16 transfer. The school is affiliated to many further education colleges in the area. The school's council is part of Newham Youth Parliament, within which all schools and the nearby university debate and air views. Trainee graduate teachers are always welcome in the school and many often stay on at Brampton Manor as full-time teachers.
38. Spiritual development in the school is satisfactory. This is a multi-faith school and several subjects, including religious education and history, present spiritual experiences to the students in a variety of ways. The Spiritual Garden is an attractive area and effectively represents different beliefs and cultural traditions of the world. Assemblies deal effectively with social and moral issues and the school celebrates Divali, Jewish New Year and Eid. However, opportunities for regular spiritual reflection are not taken up. The school does not meet the statutory requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship.
39. The school makes good provision for the moral education of its students. Students know the difference between right and wrong and respect the school's expectations. The school's efforts to tackle bullying and poor behaviour have been significant. Students in Years 10 and 11 are trained as mediators in conflict management and tackling the behaviour and attitudes of bullies. Year 8 students visit partner primary schools to act as conflict mediators. Students value the action taken and the credit and demerit system is effectively used to encourage and support good behaviour and attitudes around the school.
40. The school makes a good contribution to the social education of its students. Students support an extensive range of charities including Jeans of Genes, Aids Awareness, Amnesty and Cystic Fibrosis. The school also sets targets for the social behaviour of the students in co-operation with parents. The School Council is a significant element in the school's provision for social development and meets regularly. The whole school is involved in the elections for Head Boy and Head Girl, when the hall is turned into a polling station.
41. This is a truly multi-cultural school that provides a good cultural education for its students. Lunchtime activities are wide ranging and include clubs in Asian culture, Film, Performing Arts, Steel Band, gardening and year group newsletters. The drama and music departments put on events regularly. Students have recently had the advantage of studying with a visiting artist, poet and the ROKO theatre company. There are regular trips to Germany and Paris as well as visits to the ballet, Rochester Castle and a Jewish Museum. Strong cultural connections are made through the Black History project and in history and ICT lessons. Students also learn about dance from New Zealand and Australia and about African mask making.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS?

42. The school has very good procedures for child protection and ensuring the welfare of its students. Overall, these procedures are a strength of the school and have improved considerably since the previous inspection. They now contribute significantly to a safe and caring environment in which students are safe to pursue their learning.
43. The school's experienced child protection person has ensured that all staff receive the relevant training and new teachers receive the same as part of their induction. The school maintains a detailed and well-written policy based on that of the local authority. The school works very closely with the local social services and police protection team and all staff are well aware of whom to contact in an emergency. An incidence file and all relevant documents are securely locked away.
44. The school has a very well trained health and safety officer who has produced a well-written and detailed policy and, up-to-date risk assessment documents. The school has a well-provided medical room staffed by a fully qualified first aid person. Other first aiders are available in relevant departments. Special medical needs of certain students are well known to staff. Accident procedures are well documented. Good use is made of external agencies.
45. The school's procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are satisfactory and have been effective in achieving the recent improvements in attendance figures. Senior pastoral staff analyse all figures regularly and work closely with the local welfare educational officer. The school maintains an effective lateness routine.
46. The school has very good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and eliminating those incidents of an oppressive nature. The very detailed written policy contains clear and relevant awards and sanctions. Student misbehaviour results in being sent into 'Holdings' at either end of the main school building. Here the offenders are interviewed by relevant staff who decide whether students can be returned to class with a warning or spend a period in the Brompton Inclusion Unit. Minor offences in tutorials can result in demerits or, for praiseworthy efforts, merits. The latter can eventually accumulate towards a certificate presented at the Governors' Ceremony and these are popular with the students. Some senior students train as mediators or advisers. They can advise others, particularly the youngest students, on how to recognise bullying and also have the confidence either to report such incident to an adult or mediator or to walk away from the situation.
47. The school has good procedures for monitoring and supporting students' personal development. The school's PSHE co-ordinator is constantly striving to improve the quality of provision. When interviewed, all students agreed that they liked the variety of activities on offer and the way that sessions are presented.
48. All students have their own individual National Record of Achievement in which they maintain personal pieces of work and well-earned certificates. All students have the chance to be on the School Council or be peer mediators. The main school counsellors are elected in a true democratic way similar to members of parliament, which develops their confidence and self-esteem.

Assessment

49. The procedures for assessing students' attainment and progress are effective. The school meets its statutory requirements.
50. Detailed, on-going records are maintained on every student from their attainment at the end of Year 6, on entry to the school, through to the end of Year 11. These are stored centrally on computer. Records drawn from these are also held by tutors and within each faculty. Each subject keeps its own record of day-to-day assessment and feeds results to the central database

as required. The data are used extensively and regularly to analyse the attainment and progress of year groups and of individual students. Analysis of performance with reference to gender and ethnicity is also undertaken. Results from National Curriculum tests and GCSE examinations are used to establish whether appropriate progress has been made in each key stage and to make predictions and set targets. Relative performance indicators are calculated for comparisons between subjects. The differences between predicted grades and actual grades are also calculated. At present, the information that can be gathered on a year group's progress, between the end of each key stage, is incomplete, as the appropriate software is not yet in place and only sampling can be done. The effects of the high numbers of mid-phase admissions and departures by students are regularly reviewed. The school supplements its own records with data from the local authority and liaises with one of the authority's statisticians.

51. The quality of the assessment carried out in subjects ranges from very good to unsatisfactory. Overall the procedures are good but there is a need to standardise some procedures and raise the quality of assessment and recording to a high level in all areas of the curriculum if the collected data are to be used to full effect.
52. This comprehensive database is seen by the school as a very valuable and practical tool that is central to the monitoring and appraisal of the school's effectiveness and is used rigorously and energetically to that end. The data are used to monitor the impact of teaching and learning in relation to the measured progress of students. From this, teachers are asked to consider the implications for future teaching and curricular planning and in determining professional development needs. Successful teaching and learning strategies are shared and any apparent weaknesses analysed. Parents are interviewed to discuss the findings. Students are also interviewed and helped in reflecting on their progress. Further opportunities for self-assessment are being considered. Results from National Curriculum tests and internal assessments are effectively used to set long-term targets but less effectively in setting shorter-term individual or class learning objectives. Targets that are set are recorded and known by the students. The setting of long-term targets is hampered by the changing cohorts in each key stage through mid-phase admissions and departures.
53. The use of assessment information across the curriculum to guide planning is satisfactory, overall. The effectiveness of its use ranges from very good to unsatisfactory. Very good practice was found in mathematics and good practice in English, science, history, modern languages and physical education but it was found to be unsatisfactory in information and communication technology, design and technology, geography and music.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

54. Generally, parents are positive and support the organisational changes which have, in their view, led to the school's making good progress in the last two years. Inspection evidence supports their view that behaviour and teaching have improved over the past two years.
55. The quality of information that parents receive from the school is satisfactory. All parents receive a well-presented prospectus and a handbook when their children first join the school. The prospectus complies with all statutory requirements. Student reports are individual, they comment on all subjects of the curriculum and state realistic targets. Parents receive an informative newsletter regularly. Parents are able to attend regular educational review meetings with teachers and have easy access to the head teacher and staff by telephone.
56. Parents contribute satisfactorily to their children's learning. This is mainly through the good use by the school of such events as the upper school curriculum evenings on 'How to Support Your Child'. Parents are also well involved through the school handbook and particularly the homework booklet. The latter is a good two-way communication system with the school and many parents make very constructive comments in them.

57. The total impact of parents' involvement in the work of the school promotes sound standards and quality within the school. The school is indebted to its very energetic and versatile Friends of Brampton. The association raises considerable funds by arranging social events from which money has been used to help buy needed resources or to support gardening projects. In addition, they have also initiated curriculum evenings on GCSE, work experience, careers and re-arranging the school day.
58. The school's links with its parents are satisfactory. They compare well with those noted at the previous inspection and contribute considerably towards the success of the safety and well-being of their children and hence the development of the children's learning.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

59. The leadership and management of the school by the head teacher and key staff are very good. The headteacher has been able to steer the school by taking positive, purposeful and effective action to bring about many improvements. He enjoys the trust of the governing body and is ably assisted by the senior management team. He leads effectively and communicates a clear sense of purpose and educational direction to all members of staff, who work together effectively. The senior management team has clear roles and responsibilities. They have analysed a number of the developmental needs of the school and established key priorities for action. By making behaviour, attendance, teaching and learning the main priorities, the head has focused staff on the need to raise standards. Lines of communication have been strengthened and the systems and structures necessary for improvement are now in place. The impetus for improvement in standards is now provided through target setting and extensive monitoring by senior staff. There is good delegation throughout the school. Subject leadership is very good in mathematics, science, history, and modern foreign languages and good in religious education, information & communications technology, English, physical education and special educational needs. Leadership is unsatisfactory in art and geography. The school has made good improvements in dealing with many of the issues from the last inspection report by, for example, improving student behaviour, attendance, the quality of teaching and producing a more strategic development plan.
60. The school has a clear set of achievable aims and values. There is a very strong commitment to social inclusion, and to raising students' attainment throughout the school. The quality of leadership and management in learning support is good. This is effective in promoting a caring and positive environment where students feel secure. The team play a key role in the development of inclusion practice and this permeates the school. Staff expertise in the special education needs department is a strength. Funding, through the well co-ordinated *Excellence in Cities* initiative, is well used to support special educational needs, the Brampton inclusion centre and provision for gifted or talented students. This helps to raise standards and promote inclusion. All staff are well supported by senior management. This enables them to succeed and to raise standards. The school is keen to confront all forms of discrimination and racism.
61. Positive relationships exist between the governing body and the senior management team. The governors are well aware of their roles and responsibilities in shaping the direction of the school in partnership with the head teacher. They receive information from the head teacher that enables them to carry out their duties effectively. They use the expertise available to them very well in a clear and well-organized committee structure. They have a strategic view of the priorities for the school's development, and are well aware of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The governors' annual report to parents contains all the necessary information required by law. Governors make regular visits to the school, talk to teachers and students and visit classrooms. They are made welcome by all staff. The mechanisms for the appraisal of the head teacher are in place and effective. Governors receive reports from the finance manager and this enables them to fulfil their overall responsibility for the school's financial arrangements.
62. The monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching are very good. All senior staff and middle managers monitor performance. Self-evaluation underpins this development and there is a clear recognition by all staff of the need for this. The staff, including the senior management team, are

on a clearly defined and managed programme of professional development. Much of the development of teaching is conducted 'in-house'. This is good professional development for trainer and trainee alike. The quality of support for newly qualified teachers and those new to the school is very good and is valued by participants. The coherent in-service training provision links school and staff development needs. The school's strategy for appraisal and performance management is effective and links well with the professional development programme. Careful monitoring and sharing of good practice has led to a significant improvement in teaching. In addition, the school has a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses, and those aspects requiring further support. The school is keen to develop as a centre for the training of new teachers. It sees recruitment of good quality staff as a key priority for current and future development.

63. The school development plan is an effective working document. It is well costed, identifies areas of weakness and provides positive ways of rectifying them. The last inspection indicated that the targets set were not specific enough about the practicalities of improving standards. Targets are now fewer, and more specifically focused on school improvement. The school makes good use of data. The analysis of comparative assessment data is well used by senior staff and middle managers.
64. Financial management, in support of the school's priorities is very good. The financial manager, in collaboration with the deputy head in charge of the curriculum, ensures that the allocation of funds is well targeted at the priorities stated in the school development plan. Reports are presented monthly to the governors' finance committee and this ensures accountability. There are no significant outstanding issues from the last audit report. The administration uses appropriate systems for financial management. In addition, there are plans to improve these even further. All grant moneys are used for the purpose for which they are intended. The school is currently paying £50,000 each year over five years to clear a loan from the Borough for the completion of the school building. The school applies the principles of best value well. Overall, the school provides satisfactory value for money.
65. Overall, the match of teachers to the needs of the curriculum is unsatisfactory in a number of subjects. The school does have a clearly defined policy for recruitment. This has led to the school being fully staffed in spite of large annual staff turnover. There is a clear recognition by the school of the need to appoint good quality staff. In areas of staff shortage, permanent appointments are only made on the basis of good quality teaching. This can lead to a significant number of supply and non-specialist staff covering classes. The school sees recruitment as a clear and continuing priority.
66. The special needs department is well led by an experienced and committed co-ordinator, and there is a strong element of teamwork and co-operation among all staff. The governor for special educational needs has a very good perception of the work of the department and a clear vision of what needs to be done for further improvement. Departmental documentation is up to date and well managed. The department has well established assessment and recording procedures, and the governor's report to parents gives a clear and detailed outline of the school's provision. In addition to the termly updating of individual education and pastoral care plans, the progress of all students is monitored on a daily basis by an experienced and specialist team of teaching and support staff. The restructuring and staffing of the Brampton Inclusion Unit has a positive impact on the school's behaviour policy and supports a reduction in the numbers of excluded students aged 14 years or younger. Special needs staffing levels are good, with a number of staff trained in specific needs such as autism. Relevant training is ongoing and all staff feel well supported and confident in dealing with the wide range of students' needs. Despite the best efforts of staff to create an attractive learning environment, the accommodation is unsatisfactory. In both the special needs building and the Brampton Inclusion Centre staff and students are obliged to share the inadequate toilet facilities, which have no lockable doors. There is no wheelchair access in either building and no lift access to the upper floor in the special needs unit. In the Brampton Inclusion Centre the kitchen facilities are unsuitable for food technology lessons. Fire safety equipment is inadequate and first-aid materials are not easily accessible. There are not enough resources such as chopping boards and tables, and this lowers levels of hygiene in food preparation. There is an appropriate but limited range of computer software and books and overall

resources within the special needs department are satisfactory. A small computer suite in the centre is not yet fully operational and students with poor hand and eye co-ordination skills do not have personal laptop computers in inclusive mainstream lessons. The department has received substantial support from its very good links with local industries, and has benefited from donations that include a ball-pond, a sensory room and garden plants.

67. Since the previous inspection the provision for special educational needs has significantly improved. In science for example, the students now make good progress both in the special needs departments and within inclusive lessons, because the expertise of supporting teachers and the use of individual education plans ensure that lesson content and resources are appropriate to the students' needs. All students are included in mainstream lessons for part of their education. The needs of gifted and talented students are met through lesson planning and resources, and problems with disruptive students are now well met through the revised behaviour policy and practice. The local education authority, which initially provided a full-time team of special needs and behaviour support advisors after the last report, has been able to reduce this to one adviser for one day a week. This represents good improvement in the provision for special educational needs.
68. The proportion of the school budget allocated to the provision of learning resources is higher than the national average. Resources for most subjects are at least adequate and for some they are good. Music makes very good use of computers and is well provided with a range of instruments that allow the music of different cultures to be performed. Physical education can provide each student in a class with a monitor to measure heart rate, enhancing their knowledge of and interest in health and fitness. Modern foreign languages lack some essential audiovisual equipment. Design and technology suffers a critical lack of resources to teach the subject in all years. Staff lack the opportunity to use certain materials and techniques essential to cover the National Curriculum effectively. There is little provision for teaching systems and control technology.
69. The library is an attractive area and is well used by students both during teaching hours and during lunchtime. Overall, the number of books available to students is good but there are deficiencies in some subject areas. A well-catalogued section containing books written in languages other than English reflects the multi-ethnic nature of the school. Unfortunately, this section suffers unfortunately from the school's inability to obtain material suitable for older readers. A suite of 17 computers, linked to the Internet, along with other audio-visual equipment complements the book resources and is well used at all times. A teacher librarian and a library assistant ably manage the area. The contribution, that they are able to make to students' learning is restricted owing to the lack of a computerised management system. More generous financial provision would allow staff to rectify deficiencies and pursue more rigorously its policy of replacing unsuitable stock.
70. Five dedicated suites of computers, giving a student to computer ratio of 7.7:1m, provide a valuable resource. Networked computers are also installed in most departments. Computers are used particularly well in some departments, for example music, but not all departments take full advantage of this provision. Students' science education, for example, would benefit if they were able to make more use of the computers for data logging and capture.
71. Overall, the accommodation is now satisfactory. There has been extensive building and refurbishment of the premises since the last inspection. There are improved facilities for many of the subject areas. Although there is now an all weather sports pitch for games, facilities for physical education are still unsatisfactory. There is inadequate provision for indoor activities and the school does not have a multi-purpose sports hall. Changing facilities are inadequate. The rooms and facilities for ICT are now good but the accommodation for teaching students with special educational needs is in need of refurbishment. The buildings are clean and many areas of the school are well decorated. The day-to-day maintenance of the accommodation and the school's environment is satisfactory. The school has no rooms set aside for prayer to provide for the needs of Muslim boys and girls.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

72. In order to raise standards further, the headteacher, governors and staff should

(1) **improve students' literacy skills in all subjects by:

- implementing the strategies for improving literacy outlined in the school's 'Teaching and learning action plan 2001/2001' ;
- continuing to explore strategies for raising the achievement of boys;
- emphasising speaking and reading skills in all lessons;
- improving students' writing skills.

[Paragraphs 7, 84-86, 137, 185]

(2) **improve the opportunities for students to use ICT in the curriculum by:

- improving teachers' personal ICT skills with a programme of training in the use of ICT in their subjects;
- analysing schemes of work in all subjects for appropriate opportunities to use ICT;
- monitoring the impact of the programme through the evaluation of teaching and learning and performance management.

[Paragraphs 7, 20, 29, 150-164]

- (3) raise standards and achievement in art and design, geography and design and technology by:
- improving the quality of teaching, especially improving pace and urgency in lessons;
 - setting tasks which excite and inspire students;
 - improving the range of opportunities for students to learn independently.

[Paragraphs 117-125, 126-133, 134-139]

- (4) improve provision for students for whom English is an additional language by:
- ensuring that support for newly arrived students with very little or no English is provided at an earlier stage;
 - using support staff more efficiently;
 - developing a wider range of specialist materials and resources.

[Paragraphs 9, 28, 79, 82-83,]

*** Already identified in the school's development plan.*

The school also needs to:

- meet the requirement for a daily act of collective worship; *[Paragraph 38]*
- fulfil statutory requirements on disapplication of students not following courses in design and technology and modern foreign languages in Years 10 and 11. *[Paragraph 31]*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	181
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and students	54

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	13	26	60	70	10	2	0
Percentage	7	14	33	39	6	1	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. [When the total number is substantially less than 100, add] Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s]. [Where the total is close to or greater than 100, use only the first sentence.]

Information about the school's students

Students on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11
Number of students on the school's roll	1593
Number of full-time students known to be eligible for free school meals	923

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of students with statements of special educational needs	80
Number of students on the school's special educational needs register	346

English as an additional language	No of students
Number of students with English as an additional language	736

Student mobility in the last school year	No of students
Students who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	115
Students who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

Attendance

Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence
%	%

School data	6.7
National comparative data	8.1

School data	2.2
National comparative data	1.1

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered students in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2001	174	146	320

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	37	77	69
	Girls	69	64	58
	Total	106	141	127
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	School	33 (35)	44 (37)	40 (27)
	National	64 (63)	66 (65)	66 (59)
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	School	9 (12)	23 (14)	16 (5)
	National	31 (28)	43 (42)	34 (30)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	54	68	53
	Girls	66	62	51
	Total	120	130	104
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	School	36 (36)	41 (43)	33 (32)
	National	65 (64)	68 (66)	64 (62)
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	School	5 (13)	18 (11)	14 (15)
	National	31 (31)	42 (39)	35 (29)

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered students in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	2001	136	146	282

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of students achieving the standard specified	Boys	25	116	131
	Girls	53	129	142
	Total	78	245	273
Percentage of students achieving the standard specified	School	28 (27)	87 (83)	97 (96)
	National	48 (47)	91 (91)	96 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per student	School	29.0
	National	39.0

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

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

Ethnic background of students

	No of students
Black – Caribbean heritage	89
Black – African heritage	205
Black – other	35
Indian	87
Pakistani	123
Bangladeshi	98
Chinese	6
White	763
Any other minority ethnic group	126

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	9	1
Black – African heritage	35	1
Black – other	10	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	11	2
Bangladeshi	2	0
Chinese	0	0
White	58	1
Other minority ethnic groups	10	1

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	100
Number of students per qualified teacher	15.9

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	21
Total aggregate hours worked per week	456

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	69
---	----

Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Financial information

Financial year	2000 - 2001
----------------	-------------

	£
Total income	5,533,639
Total expenditure	5,525,391
Expenditure per student	3,469
Balance brought forward from previous year	176,837
Balance carried forward to next year	185,085

Key Stage 3	21
Key Stage 4	20

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	75
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	79

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	10
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	8
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1593
Number of questionnaires returned	149

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	47	43	5	3	2
My child is making good progress in school.	41	52	3	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	46	36	7	5	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	42	36	14	5	2
The teaching is good.	34	52	10	1	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	34	40	18	5	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	50	40	4	4	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	33	3	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	32	42	18	1	6
The school is well led and managed.	42	42	5	1	10
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	42	45	3	3	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	46	37	7	3	8

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

ENGLISH

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

Strengths

- Commitment to improvement.
- Use of assessment to raise standards.
- Management of students.
- Extra-curricular activities.

Areas for improvement

- Giving students the means to become independent learners.
- Raising expectations to provide greater challenge.
- Greater emphasis on speaking and reading.

73. Attainment on entry is well below nationally expected levels. Results of National curriculum tests taken at the end of Year 9 show that standards are in line with those from similar schools, but still well below standards in schools nationally. Within the school, test results are similar to those in mathematics but weaker than those in science. GCSE English language results have declined very slightly in the last four years, standing now at two-thirds of the national average. However, the number of A grades has increased. Moreover, in 2001 many students performed better in English language than they did in other exams. English literature results have declined rather more sharply and remain close to half the national average. Standards indicated both by the Year 9 national tests and GCSE examinations conceal large differences between boys and girls. Twice as many girls achieve high grades as do boys.
74. Standards of writing observed in lessons are in line with these results. Year 7 students show positive attitudes to their work, writing accurately and neatly. Standards in Years 8 and 9 were lower, with many students presenting untidy and inaccurate work. Spelling, punctuation and width of vocabulary are all well below the expected levels. Students are not challenged sufficiently to think for themselves and express their own ideas, nor encouraged to write at sufficient length. This leads to slow progress and unsatisfactory achievement among all but the lowest ability students. Those with English as an additional language attain standards appropriate for their ability, and with few exceptions are not held back by a particular weakness in language. The ablest students showed in their redrafted work that they can express themselves clearly, using good knowledge of the text to discuss poverty and cruelty in *Oliver Twist*, or arguing persuasively about animal testing.
75. Students make progress through Years 10 and 11, but standards are below national expectations, and there is still some underachievement. Moreover, there is a gap between the few ablest and the rest. Among many students basic skills remain weak, as does understanding. Nearly all students can re-tell the plot of *An Inspector Calls*, describe the characters in *Of Mice and Men*, or explain verse by verse what a poem is saying. In discussing a poem about apartheid, students responded well to the teacher's skill in encouraging comments, some of which were deeply felt and perceptive. However, they are often unable to see beneath the surface meaning of a poem like *Dulce et Decorum est* or perceive the sly humour in *The Beggar Maid*. They have been given some analytical tools but are weak in applying them. The ablest can write at length, both about literature and in imaginative stories. Most of these are girls. Gifted and talented students are identified and encouraged to enter national competitions, attend an Advanced English Skills Club, and participate in language study at the local school. But they are given too little extension work in lessons.
76. Habits of reading in Year 7 are chiefly encouraged by form tutors holding boxes of books from which students take a book to read during the morning tutorial periods. The library is an attractive

and very effective resource, popular at lunch times, and well used by groups of students during lessons. At the time of the inspection, nearly half the school population had a book from the library out on loan. Year 10 students are paired with weak readers in Year 7, and support staff are assiduous in giving the weakest students practice in reading. But overall, too little time is spent reading in English lessons, and the practice of keeping a reading record has not yet been introduced beyond Year 7. Standards of reading are generally below expectation: when students read aloud they do so hesitantly and often inaudibly.

77. Standards of speaking and listening are also below national expectation. Students are not given enough opportunity to speak, either in groups or to the whole class. Discussions are dominated by the teacher, so students get too little scope for expressing opinions, and consequently too little scope for listening to each other and entering into dialogue. But good examples were observed, the best being a mock trial of the character, George, in *Of Mice and Men*. Students took the part of judge, jury, counsel and witnesses. The writing and the delivery of the speeches were very good, and some of the spontaneous, improvised speaking was excellent.
78. The standard of teaching is satisfactory in all years, with a few lessons in Years 10 and 11 that were very good or excellent. In many respects the standard of teaching is good. Teachers are highly committed and work hard to raise standards. Their dedication is appreciated by the students, who accordingly want to please. Teachers are familiar with their subject and the latest guidance on how to teach it. They prepare thoroughly, sometimes using a bank of materials that they have made themselves. They plan the lessons intelligently so there is a balance of activity and good pace. They manage students very well, so relations are conducive to good work. Students know what is expected of them. Teachers mark thoroughly, and do all they can to help, guide and encourage students. The use of ICT is satisfactory.
79. However, there are weaknesses, and they are vital ones. Central to many lessons, and so in the department as a whole, is a weakness in challenging students and getting them to think for themselves. Students are consequently less able to develop into independent learners. They use the library and Internet for research, but do not question a text, widen their vocabulary or try out new stylistic devices for themselves. As a result, and in general, the quality of learning is unsatisfactory, and there is underachievement, particularly among the average and above average students. The weaker students, and those with special educational needs make good progress, as is seen when comparing current work with that done two or three years earlier. Most of those with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress, little hampered by the fact that English is not the first language they speak. However, support staff should target more accurately those who are in greatest need and ensure that they can cope with the demands made upon them. There are students who cannot read the books used by the rest of the class, and have too little special provision made for them.
80. The department has suffered in the last few years from a rapid turnover of staff. The department still depends on several teachers who are not yet qualified, or in one case not an English specialist. However, the school offers very good training and support for such teachers. There is no damaging effect on standards, and indeed a very strong commitment among all staff to contribute to the running and success of the department. The new subject leader has done much to improve the way the department is run, revising and often originating schemes of work, policies and procedures. One promising development is the regular monitoring and evaluation of teaching, and another is an overhaul of assessment procedures. Use of data now allows detailed analyses of students' performance, and is helping to raise standards by showing teachers and students where weaknesses lie. Teachers organise many extra-curricular activities that make the subject attractive, and there has been fruitful co-operation with local primary schools and schools.
81. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory, chiefly in organisation and in commitment to succeed. Morale is high and this has communicated itself to students, whose attitude to the subject is good. The quality of teaching and the resulting standards have remained consistent. Teachers have yet to see that students speak more effectively, that they are sufficiently challenged, and encouraged to become more independent learners. The gap between boys and girls has grown. Above all, the department needs to raise standards among boys.

English as an additional language

82. Provision for English as an additional language is unsatisfactory. The high number of students with English as an additional language means that resources are spread too thinly across the school. Furthermore, priorities have not been set for use of available resources which, in consequence, do not meet students' needs. As a result, some students do not develop a good control of English. Despite this, others, by virtue of their natural ability and constant contact with English, make good progress in learning the language and achieve well in their tests and examinations. This is particularly true of girls from a variety of ethnic and language backgrounds. Extra support provided recently in humanities increased the number of students who completed their course work for the 2001 GCSE examinations and enabled all to gain a grade. Such support is not provided widely, however. The department uses its base room well as a place where students can congregate, especially during times of fasting. Nevertheless, this room is unattractive, largely because of untidy materials left behind by its previous occupants.
83. There are additional areas of weakness. The data compiled by the department and passed to subject departments on students' attainment in English are not updated regularly and lack detail. Support for newly arrived students with very little or no English is not provided early enough. Some subject teachers have very little specialised material to cater for students' needs. For example, there is a lack of specially prepared worksheets and 'writing frames' across the curriculum, to support those learning to write in English. There is insufficient training for teachers, to ensure that the English spoken by both teachers and students in lessons is always clear and loud enough to be understood by all.

Literacy

84. Provision for teaching literacy across the curriculum is very good. The school has set up both a strategic group of senior staff to oversee the lines of future development, and a working party of representatives from all curriculum areas. The latter provide subject staff with advice and practical devices by which literacy can be improved. A central aim is to get consistency across the whole school, and this has been largely achieved.
85. The co-ordinator organises ten progress groups for students with the lowest attainment in literacy. Such students meet for half an hour twice a week before the school day begins. The co-ordinator visits each group regularly to monitor the work being done. Classroom activities in lessons are evaluated and then reported on by the area representatives. The school uses its bank of assessment data to analyse progress. Data for English as an additional language students need more frequent updating, but otherwise assessment is effective, and shows that those with lowest ability are making the best progress.
86. The inspection found that all subject leaders were fully aware of the literacy strategy, and implementing it effectively. Key words are displayed in all classrooms, and all teachers draw attention to them, and ensure that in all lessons the relevant literacy issues are made apparent to the students. As a result, most students can read and understand the text books in each subject, and grow familiar with the relevant technical terms. Mistakes in writing and spelling are not consistently corrected. Standards of reading are raised in Year 7 by the provision of book boxes for use in tutorial time. The Literacy group also organise a paired reading scheme in which students in Year 10 help the weakest students in Year 7. The library is very well equipped (except for the lack of a computerised index) and very well run. All students are made welcome, and given effective instruction in how to use it. The number of books is at least twice the national average, with sensitively labelled shelves for those with English as an additional language and special educational needs.

Drama

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

Strengths

- Teaching.
- Results.
- Extra-curricular activities.

Areas for improvement

- Accommodation and resources.

87. Standards in drama are at least in line with national expectations by the age of 14, and in aspects of their work individual students are achieving above expectations. Students make very good progress in Years 10 and 11. GCSE results have consistently been among the best in the school, and close to national averages. Standards observed in lessons are in line with these results.
88. By the end of Year 9, students show good levels of concentration and involvement. They listen attentively to the teacher's exposition and can then interpret the set task with enthusiasm and imagination. They collaborate in groups in a mature manner, and in a Year 9 class were observed improvising scenes to illustrate moral dilemmas and possible solutions to them. Some students lacked awareness of audience, but used movement and body language well.
89. By the end of Year 11, many students have achieved very high standards in class. In the lessons observed they could demonstrate emotion through movement, representing in one lesson various interpretations of the seven deadly sins. In another lesson, students prepared freeze frames on the theme of refugees. The three groups worked very well together, showing an ability to concentrate and improvise quickly. Students have developed a high degree of mutual trust and respond to each other's contributions sensitively. They can absorb ideas quickly and then in a group illustrate those ideas with sophistication. They relate very well to each other, and have good command of techniques such as mime, movement, tableau, and voice. They respond particularly well to being given the freedom to adopt their own interpretations, which results in high commitment and enthusiasm for the work. It was noticeable that students with special educational needs and English as an additional language were able to contribute fully.
90. Teaching is always at least good, usually very good, and sometimes excellent. Teachers have good knowledge and competence. They have high expectations of both attainment and behaviour. Lesson objectives and activities are made clear to students in advance, with key words on a board. Teachers give much praise while also showing students how they might improve.
91. Drama is very well led and managed. The subject leader is experienced and enthusiastic. The popularity of drama is indicated by the number of groups in each of Years 10 and 11 growing from two to four. Extra-curricular provision is wide-ranging. Students experience opportunities for working with professionals in the theatre at Stratford East, and have performed at the Millennium Dome. There are fruitful links with Westminster and New Vic Schools, and visits from Theatre de Complicite. Productions are regularly staged in school, with rehearsals for the Christmas pantomime currently under way. Students also perform in local primary schools and hospitals.
92. Drama lessons have recently moved from huts to a space that used to be the library. Two drama studios have been thus converted. They are spacious, well decorated and carpeted. The department has the use of the old library office. But there is no black-out, no rostra, and inadequate lighting. Moreover, such is the popularity of the subject that when four lessons are of necessity time-tabled simultaneously two teachers have to teach elsewhere, one in a cold and badly decorated hut, the other in a school passage.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- The management of the subject.
- The collation and use of assessment data.
- Students' good progress in Years 7 to 9.
- The quality of teaching.

Areas for improvement

- Aspects of lesson planning.
- Integration of the National Numeracy Strategy to strengthen basic skills further.
- Use of ICT.

93. Students enter the school in Year 7 with well below average numeracy skills. Students achieve well through Years 7 to 9. The standard of work seen indicates that attainment in mathematics by the end of Year 9 is below average rather than well below. This constitutes a rise to standards closer to the national expectations. The results of the National Curriculum tests in 2000 show attainment to be low when compared with national standards but in comparison to similar schools it is above average. Students' average points score was better than those in science but below those in English. There was a significant improvement in the results obtained in the national tests in 2001, including a 50 per cent rise in those achieving level 6 and above. There has been a steady rise in attainment levels over recent years, reflecting the national trend.
94. The proportion of students achieving GCSE grade C and above in the 2000 GCSE examination was well below the national average but it was above the average achieved by similar schools. There was only a slight improvement in the results in 2001. The proportion achieving GCSE grade G and above was just below the national average in both years. This is an improvement on the results at the time of the last inspection.
95. Raising attainment levels in Years 7 to 9 provides a firm platform for satisfactory progress in Years 10 and 11 but the school faces many difficulties. The unusually high mid-phase admissions and departures of students, the high numbers with English as a second language, together with a small but significant level of absenteeism, especially in Years 10 and 11, all have a negative effect on the levels of attainment reached in national tests and examinations.
96. Historically, girls have significantly outperformed boys in national tests between 1996 and 2000. The gap between them in average points has also been wider than the national figure. In 2001, the percentages of girls and boys reaching level 5 and above was the same, with boys making relatively better progress than the girls. At GCSE, boys outperformed girls in 2000 but this was reversed in 2001. Relative attainment levels are regularly analysed in order to monitor boys' and girls' progress and strategies are in place to raise boys' performance.
97. In Years 7 to 9, in the lessons observed and in written work seen, the majority of students are reaching levels of attainment that are below expected national levels for their ages. Higher attaining students show work that is in line with expectations and, at times, work that is above that. They can effectively apply Pythagoras' Theorem to simple problems, simplify expressions in algebra, use complex formulae, such as that for the volume of a sphere, rotate and transform shapes and collect and record continuous data to create frequency tables. Lower attaining students, including many with English as an additional language, show a sound understanding of some important basic concepts. In Year 7, for example, they show understanding of place value up to 1000 and can divide whole numbers by 10 or 100, while higher attainers can calculate to three decimal places. In Year 8 classes, lower attaining students can determine patterns in a number sequence and substitute numbers in a formula to find the 'nth' term. They can also add and subtract both positive and negative directed numbers, with the help of a number line. Higher attainers are able to extend this to solving practical problems. In Year 9, students use varying methods, appropriate to their different attainment levels, to calculate the volumes of various prisms. Lower attainers use cubes to help them while higher attaining students can readily

interpret two-dimensional diagrams and apply a formula to both regular and irregular shapes, including cylinders.

98. In Years 10 and 11, attainment in work seen is below the expected national levels. Much of the syllabus is covered in Year 10 and Year 11 is largely used for review and further consolidation. Higher attainers in Year 10 extend their data-handling skills to deriving cumulative frequency curves, preparing scattergrams, using random sampling and determining positive and negative correlation. They understand and use equivalent fractions, decimals and percentages and solve problems involving ratios. They are also able to construct triangles and calculate angles about a point. They can find the equation of a line and so solve simple simultaneous equations graphically. Lower attaining students succeed in solving linear equations or, at a lower level, draw graphs of linear function with positive numbers. Consolidation work seen in lessons in Year 11 showed the majority of students to be able to apply what they had learned, at appropriate levels. The topics included using the correct order of application of operations when solving algebraic equations, the solving of quadratic equations by factorisation and the application of the mean, mode, median and range in statistical problems. Coursework seen in Year 11 included some work of high quality on Fibonacci patterns. High attaining students show skill in conveying complex mathematical concepts with appropriate notation or symbolism. At a lower attainment level students still show an ability to generalise and make and tests patterns and communicate their findings. The lowest attainers are able to manipulate simple numbers in solving straightforward relationships.
99. Most students show an adequate grasp of basic operational skills needed for the level of work they meet but overall numeracy levels are below average. This slows procedures and progress at times. Students show a lack of confidence in performing simple multiplication and division processes, for example, and have too ready a recourse to the use of calculators. The introduction of aspects of the National Numeracy Strategy in Years 7 to 9 would improve this. The use of a structured programme of mental exercises at the beginning of each lesson is an example. Students with special educational needs are making satisfactory progress in relation to prior attainment in all years.
100. Students' attitudes to learning are good, overall, and most students make commensurate progress. This is a marked improvement on the observations made at the last inspection. Students very largely are well motivated, show a commitment to their work, concentrate on the tasks set and respond well to the teachers. Many high attainers are keen to engage their teachers in discussion. Lower attaining students are less disposed to this and tend to be rather passive recipients of instruction. There is no disharmony evident between different racial groups or boys and girls. Students usually work co-operatively and constructively in class, often consulting and helping each other. The occasions when this is less evident arise when a class is left for too long on working through textbook exercises. Concentration begins to wane and noise levels creep up. This is particularly so in lower attaining classes and in one instance the behaviour and attitudes became unsatisfactory.
101. The quality of teaching is good, overall, but better at Years 10 and 11. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The teaching observed ranges from very good to unsatisfactory but a very high proportion was satisfactory or good. Although experienced teachers show very good knowledge and understanding of the subject, there are several inexperienced teachers in the department and some for whom mathematics is not their main subject. These teachers are well supported, however, and overall knowledge and understanding are sound. The department has suffered in recent years from not having an established complement of staff but the situation has improved markedly over the last year and is now stable. The central strength in the teaching lies in the management of classes, the high expectations of their students, the sharing of objectives, and an emphasis on methods and keywords. This is supported by high quality assessment, through homework and regular tests, and analysis of students' levels of understanding and progress. The displays in classroom are very good and add valuable support to learning.
102. The effectiveness of teaching methods is generally good but there are some weaknesses in the planning of lessons. Plans are usually in broad outline only. The overarching aim and the content

of the lesson is clear but the details of strategies to teach specific skills that lead to the main objective are not always indicated. There is an over-emphasis on working through text exercises over extended periods without the teacher intervening to address the whole class. The exercises are always appropriate for consolidation of concepts but they could be better managed as a teaching method. There is limited use of ICT in lessons to support learning. More special materials need to be prepared for lower attaining students, rather than relying on a textbook. There is a need for greater awareness of specific needs. Specific learning tasks should be set rather than relying on how much work each student covers of the same exercise. Appropriate extension work is usually available for higher attainers. Useful broad, long-term targets are set but there is a need to assist students more in their immediate advance in understanding through short-term, specific individual learning targets. The timing of phases of the lesson in the plan would assist in structuring some lessons better; many leave too little time for an effective review of the lesson.

103. After some years of instability the subject is now being very well led. The new co-ordinator has put in a much improved management structure, with a good distribution of responsibilities. A member of the senior management teaches mathematics and is a valuable part of that structure. It is a young, lively department with a sense of purpose that works as a team and is willing to share the more successful strategies. The new handbook is a well-structured and useful document and the schemes of work provide a good platform for planning lessons. There is good practice in the monitoring of both students' progress and the effectiveness of teaching and marking. There is an appropriate development plan with the core aim of improving standards. Each of these features is a large improvement on the situation at the time of the last inspection. The department is now well placed to move ahead and develop the potential of all its students and so achieve higher attainment levels.

Numeracy

104. Skills in numeracy across the curriculum are below average but, in view of the low attainment levels on entry to the school, the effectiveness of strategies for teaching these skills is found to be satisfactory. The mathematics department has drawn up a policy statement and a development plan for the whole school. Policy and planned procedures have been evaluated with the intention of launching numeracy across the curriculum in June 2002. Each department is to evaluate its scheme of work to assess how it can support the raising of numeracy skills through lesson planning. A local education authority advisor is to assist in training the staff. Although a whole school strategy is yet to be put in place the current focus from the mathematics department is supported, to some degree, by other areas of the curriculum. There are contributions through art in developing spatial awareness through ideas of proportion and scale, in geography in the interpretation of graphs and statistics and in science through the interpretation and representation of experimental results. Few examples have been noted elsewhere in the curriculum.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- Leadership and management of the department.
- Staff work well together and are committed to raising standards.
- Quality of teaching, especially the development of innovative techniques for helping students to revise for examinations.
- Relationships with students.

Areas for improvement

- Continued development of strategies for raising attainment.
- The quality of marking, to inform students what they need to do to improve.
- The use of ICT to support teaching and learning.

105. In the 2000 National Curriculum tests, the school's performance in science was very low in comparison with the national average and was lower than that in the two previous years. It was also well below average in comparison with similar schools and below those obtained by students in mathematics and English. Girls performed better than boys. The results for 2001 showed a marked improvement and were closer to the national average. Value is added to the majority of students' learning and achievement. Performance in science was above average in comparison with similar schools.
106. In the 2000 GCSE examination in double award science the proportion of students obtaining grades A* to C was below the national average and the proportion obtaining grades A* to G was close to the national average. Girls performed better than boys. Around two thirds of the students entered double award science and the remainder entered single award. In the single award examination, the proportion of students obtaining grades A* to C was well below the national average. Overall, the 2000 results were similar to those in the two previous years but those for 2001 were lower than those for 2000. The department experienced great difficulty in obtaining suitably qualified teachers during the year prior to the examination and this had a negative effect on standards. Performance in 2001 was above average when compared to similar schools.
107. Inspection evidence shows that standards towards the end of Year 9 are below the nationally expected level. Many students enter the school with levels of attainment which are well below the national average but they make good progress during Years 7 to 9. The highest attaining students are performing at levels close to those expected nationally and they develop a sound knowledge and understanding in all four attainment targets. They know about the effects of gravity and air resistance on falling bodies, about reflection and refraction and the process of photosynthesis. Lower attaining students have difficulty understanding the difference between mass and weight and although they can describe the reactions between acids and alkalis they cannot write word equations. Students in Year 7 competently carry out procedures such as filtration and evaporation.
108. By Year 11, the highest attaining students have developed a good understanding of the National Curriculum programmes of study. Their attainment approaches national expectation and some exceed it. They have a good understanding of atomic configuration and can use it to place elements in the periodic table. Higher attainers have a good knowledge of both the digestive and circulatory systems. The knowledge of lower attainers is more limited but they know the names of the principal organs and some of their functions. Most students are able to use the Internet to aid their research.
109. The written work of higher attainers in all years is usually satisfactory and often good but for many lower attainers the standard of presentation is poor. Students in Years 7 to 9 use notebooks to record their work. This is sometimes unfinished, diagrams and tables are produced without the use of rulers and there is a lack of organisation. Students in Years 10 and 11 use work books which have been produced by the department. These are of very good quality. They provide students with opportunities to work in several different styles and guide them in their presentation. Some low attaining students in these years produce work of an unsatisfactory standard but this is less marked than in Years 7 to 9.
110. As part of its strategy for raising the attainment of boys the department produces material that enables students to organise their written work and gain confidence in their communication skills. This use of specially adapted worksheets, which aid presentation as well as improving understanding, also contributes to the progress of students with special educational needs. Their progress is at least satisfactory and for some it is good. Their needs are met largely through teachers' planning, since little additional support is provided in science lessons. Evidence of mathematical work is limited but is nevertheless sufficient to allow students to have access to the National Curriculum. Most students at all levels of attainment can draw and interpret graphs. The department has a limited number of computers in the laboratories and has access to the school's computer suites. Recently acquired data logging apparatus is underused. Although students are

sometimes encouraged to use the Internet for research and to produce their work electronically, the use of ICT is limited.

111. The standard of teaching in all years is always satisfactory and in well over half of the lessons observed it was good or very good. Lessons are carefully planned, providing opportunities for students to recapitulate on previous work and consolidate current work at the end of the lesson. The overall aim of each lesson is always clear but students are not always given sufficiently clear objectives, which would keep them on task and enable them to monitor their own progress. Relationships with students are very good and humour is often used to good effect. Praise, which helps to raise students' self esteem, is a feature of many lessons. In the best lessons, expectations are high and teachers use a variety of activities to maintain interest and provide a constant challenge.
112. During the inspection week, Year 10 and Year 11 students were revising for examinations. The range of innovative techniques used by teachers to maintain interest and ensure effective revision is a strength of the department. For example, in a Year 10 lesson on digestion the teacher, after clearly explaining the aim of the lesson, introduced an activity in which students used cards to match the names of organs and their functions to a large diagram of the digestive system. They were encouraged to discuss with one another these and related aspects of digestion. In a further more challenging task they matched words to definitions and then answered structured questions. The lesson concluded with a very good summary. All students consolidated their knowledge and the higher attainers were able to extend it further through discussion, for example of the action of different enzymes.
113. The department, in order to raise boys' attainment, ensures that students have as much kinaesthetic experience as possible. Boys who would otherwise lose interest in reading and writing about science respond to this approach. All students enjoy practical work which they carry out confidently and competently. In a Year 7 class, for example, the teacher drew on the students' enjoyment of the previous lesson on homemade indicators and introduced the more challenging topic of pH. Students then used indicator paper to find out how acidic or how alkaline samples of household substances were. A well-planned lesson in which students enjoyed and related to things with which they were familiar resulted in good progress at all attainment levels. The department needs constantly to review its procedures to ensure maximum safety during practical sessions. Experiments are often presented in a formal way and students are not given sufficient opportunity to predict, consider variables and evaluate.
114. Teachers skilfully adapt their style to accommodate students with a wide range of needs. For example, in a group containing a large number of students for whom English is a second language, the teacher spoke very slowly and clearly, using simple sentence constructions. They had little difficulty understanding the scientific vocabulary and good progress was made. Student's scientific knowledge and understanding are enhanced through lunchtime revision sessions and a weekly science club. The books of most students are marked regularly. Comments, however, do not always give students a clear enough indication of what they have got wrong and what they need to do to improve. Assessment information is well used to provide targets, which are usually related to National Curriculum levels.
115. The head of department provides strong positive leadership. Staff work well together and are committed to raising standards. Teaching is well supported by a team of hardworking laboratory technicians. The standard of accommodation is good and staff work hard through displays to decorate laboratories, providing a stimulating and welcoming environment.
116. The department has responded positively to the last report. The quality of teaching has improved, along with student's response and behaviour. There is now more practical work and targets and priorities have been clearly identified. Use of ICT is still insufficient and attainment in all years remains below national expectations.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- Lessons are well prepared.
- Students use colour well.
- The subject makes a good contribution to cultural development.

Areas for improvement

- Standards. They are lower than they should be, and students' achievement is unsatisfactory.
- Pace and urgency in some lessons.
- Use of bolder and broader approaches.
- Too many unexciting and uninspiring tasks in drawing and painting.

117. By the end of Year 9, standards are well below national expectations. Teacher assessments for 2000 and 20001 confirm this, and similar standards are seen in the school.
118. By the end of Year 11, standards are very low. Results in 2000 at GCSE were well below average, with one-fifth of students achieving grades at A*- C, against a national average of two-thirds. Both boys and girls did worse than they do nationally, but boys did particularly badly in relation to the national average. In 2001, results fell further, with one-sixth of students achieving grades at A* to C. In addition, grades at A*-G also fell. Inspection evidence shows standards to be very low, in line with the 2001 results.
119. Achievement in Years 7 to 9 is unsatisfactory. When students come to the school at the beginning of Year 7 their work is below average, and at the end of Year 9 it is well below average. They do not improve their skills in handling materials and processes enough. They can produce work in two and three dimensions, using pencil, paint, clay and chalk pastel. As a result, some cardboard masks are seen, based on the study of African and Polynesian art, which are richly textured and well made. However, students' drawing skills are well below average, and their use of line and tone is laboured. When painting, their use of the materials lacks confidence, and paint is crudely applied.
120. Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory. Students learn to use a wider range of processes to make images in two and three dimensions through, for example, fabric printing and photography. They also use colour in a considered way, making compositions using warm and cool colours. However, their drawing lacks vigour and excitement, and too much is completed on too small a scale. This means that there are not enough opportunities to develop broader material handling skills. In addition, students' use of paint is tentative and unadventurous, and standards in photography are very low.
121. Students with special educational needs achieve an unsatisfactory level because of the weaknesses in the teaching. Students with English as an additional language know what they need to do in lessons when clear demonstrations are given. However, their progress is unsatisfactory, overall, because they cannot benefit from class discussions, or the question and answer sessions at the start and end of lessons. Although gifted and talented students are identified, extra provision for them has been infrequent, and the overall quality of teaching and learning means that they learn at the same rate as other students, which is unsatisfactory.
122. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory in all years. This is evident from an examination of the work in the school and the unsatisfactory achievement seen. In lessons seen during the inspection, however, teaching was never less than satisfactory, and the increasing emphasis on monitoring the quality of teaching and learning is beginning to have some effect. However, more time is needed for this to have an impact on standards and achievement. In the best lessons there is a good match of materials and methods to the attainment and interest levels of the students. This was seen in a lesson on lino printing, where students were able to engage with the materials physically, cutting into the lino blocks vigorously. This produced good levels of engagement and good levels of interest and application, especially among the boys. Good learning was the result. Lessons are also well prepared, and teachers are very encouraging. However, teachers lack bolder and broader approaches to painting and drawing, and give too few opportunities to develop broader handling skills. Too many of the tasks set in drawing and painting are unexciting and uninspiring, and students' attitudes are limited to no more than a satisfactory level as a result. In addition, at times teachers find it difficult to gain the attention of the whole class, and students do not listen carefully, or try as hard as they could. As a result, there is a

lack of a sense of urgency, and the pace of the lesson slows. This restricts learning also to a no better than satisfactory level.

123. Improvement since the previous inspection has been unsatisfactory. Results in GCSE examinations have fallen, and standards are now very low in Years 10 and 11. Achievement is now unsatisfactory in all years.
124. The subject makes a good contribution to students' cultural development. Artists-in-residence are used to widen the range of experiences offered, for example by using ICT to explore students' own neighbourhoods. The art of a wide range of cultures, including African prints and Polynesian masks, is often celebrated, and used to inform students' own art activity.
125. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. The subject leader has recognised and tackled many of the shortcomings recognised in the previous inspection. For example, the curriculum has improved, and planning is more consistent across the department. In addition, the monitoring of teaching and learning has improved. However, the action taken has not been urgent or effective enough, and standards have fallen.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- The quality of teaching in food technology at Key Stage 3.
- Graphical work produced for some coursework in Graphic Products GCSE.

Areas for improvement

- The overall standard of work for GCSE courses and results in these examinations.
- Behaviour of some students.
- Staffing levels, to ensure that they are adequate and stable so as to be able to offer a full design and technology curriculum.
- Development of the curriculum so that students in Years 7 to 9 get opportunities to study in all parts of the area at some time in every year.
- The attitude of some students who currently detract from the learning that is taking place in lessons.

126. The standards of work seen in Years 7 to 9 was below the national average. Standards of achievement in Years 10 and 11 remain well below the national average. Many students suffer from not being taught basic skills in the various disciplines of the area in all years. Graphical techniques and processes used in designing are generally weak and more consistency is required in the area.
127. Results in the 2001 GCSE examinations were very low in comparison with national averages. There has been a progressive decline in the success of students in GCSE examinations since 1998. Over twice as many students achieved GCSE grades A* to C in 1998 compared to 2001. There are several reasons for these low results. The most important are a chronic shortage of teaching staff over an extensive period of time, a protracted accommodation refurbishment that is now complete but has hindered the education of current students, and led to defects in the quality of teaching and learning. Twenty-four students failed to complete their GCSE courses last year because coursework was not completed fully. There is some evidence that suggests there will be an improvement in food technology in the future, primarily based on the current quality of teaching in this subject. The future prospects for resistant materials, textiles and graphics are less assured, however.
128. The quality of teaching in Years 7 to 9 is better than in Years 10 and 11. Of the lessons seen in Years 7 to 9 almost nine out of every ten were satisfactory or better. Almost a half were good. In Years 10 and 11, three-quarters of the lessons were satisfactory and one was good. Where

teaching was good it was noted that teachers had good subject knowledge, held the attention of students, maintained good lesson pace and demonstrated good presentation skills. Where it was less than satisfactory, or poor, students exhibited poor behaviour, lessons lacked interest and challenge, pace was poor and students were allowed to make too much noise. Teaching was notably better when the tasks set to students were suited to their individual ability and suitable resources were made available to them.

129. Many students come to the lessons in an enthusiastic frame of mind but a notable number are distinctly reluctant to engage in the lessons or give of their best. In a quarter of the lessons seen in Years 7 to 9, learning was judged to be unsatisfactory or poor; in Years 10 and 11 this figure rises alarmingly to almost three-quarters of the lessons seen. In the cases where learning was good students were shown to display good behaviour, have an interest in the lesson, have self-motivation and focused work-patterns. Where the learning was unsatisfactory or poor, students showed poor behaviour, little interest in the work, poor work attitudes and a lack of knowledge in the basic skills of the subject. This last factor influenced students greatly, as some students showed frustration in not being able to complete fairly simple tasks for their age.
130. The inability of the school to recruit teaching staff for the subject remains a major difficulty. Staff retention is also a difficulty. This problem manifests itself in several ways, such as in the forced change of curricular choices in Years 10 and 11 where a restricted degree of choice is available to students. There is no doubt that the school has tried hard to overcome the problem but further efforts must be maintained.
131. The previous report in 1999 highlighted a shortcoming in that the scheme of work was incomplete and needed further development. This task has still to be completed satisfactorily and this is now an urgent issue. The teachers working in the area cannot yet work in a unified way as a coherent set of principles and collective ethos have not yet been developed. At present there is no unified vision about how designing and making elements of the subject fit together to help students develop their knowledge, understanding and skills in a progressive way. The lack of subject ethos is exemplified by a current emphasis on writing and drawing rather than in the manipulation of materials.
132. As part of a school policy to improve literacy the marker boards used by teachers contain information that is of significant help to students. Technological words, themes and concepts are spelt out for the students in each lesson when this process is used. In the great majority of the lessons seen, this had been done well and demonstrates good practice.
133. Because of the alterations some of the rooms are of good quality. They are spacious and demonstrate a contemporary approach to the subject. There is however, a lack of learning resources for some tasks. The lack of appropriate graphical equipment in all areas limits the degree of high quality work that can be accomplished. In addition, the limited resources for physically manipulating resistant materials such as metals and timber mean that the curriculum has to be adapted or omitted for this shortfall. This is also true in the use of ICT and other equipment where there is no coverage of systems and control. The dropping of electronics as a GCSE subject in this year has not helped in this context.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- Integration of ICT into the geography curriculum in Years 7 to 9.

Areas for improvement

- Raising attainment at both GCSE and in Years 7 to 9.
- Management of the department.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Negative attitudes of students towards the study of geography.
--

134. GCSE results between 1998 and 2001 were well below national averages though there was considerable improvement in 2000 before standards dropped again in 2001. By contrast, national figures have been steadily rising over these years. Although the students who take geography tend to be of average and below average ability, they achieve lower grades relative to most of their other subjects. In work seen within the school, in Years 10 and 11, attainment remains well below the national average. Students who follow the GCSE course increase and deepen their knowledge and understanding of processes and patterns in work on tectonics and settlement, for instance, but overall, students have a better knowledge of geographical facts than an understanding of geographical concepts. Although there is evidence of the development of the geographical skills of mapping and enquiry, this is from a low base and coursework standards are low. The completion of coursework is a major problem.
135. In work seen within the school, attainment by the end of Year 9 is well below the national average. Students have satisfactory oral and listening skills but a major concern is the lack of writing skills. The majority cannot write accurately and punctuation and spelling are poor. Only higher attaining students can write well enough to describe geographical patterns or processes using appropriate geographical vocabulary and most of the writing seen was descriptive, with little variety of style. There were very few examples of extended written work throughout Years 7 to 9.
136. Basic geographical skills are taught in Year 7 but mapping skills are weak and insufficiently reinforced. Enquiry and fieldwork skills are also not developed well enough though Year 9 students were able to collect data about people's sports activities using questionnaires and simple graphs to illustrate their findings. Presentation skills are poor. Work is badly set out, exercise books have minimal content and work done on worksheets is often missing, reflecting poor motivation and poor literacy skills. The work of some higher attainers contains evidence of understanding of processes and patterns in, for instance, work seen on the location of a sugar factory in Newham. These students are a minority and most have not acquired the volume of knowledge expected, nor the skills to express satisfactorily the knowledge gained. Most students have satisfactory ICT skills and they can carry out simple research skills using computers, as demonstrated by a Year 7 class using Encarta to find out facts about tropical rainforests.
137. Students arrive at the school with low levels of literacy and few skills in the subject. By the end of Year 9, levels of literacy in geography are still low and students have made insufficient progress in the development of geographical skills. Achievement in Years 7 to 9 is unsatisfactory. Students achieve less well than they should because of a lack of a coherent learning programme and uninspiring teaching that fails to promote positive attitudes to the subject. Not enough attention is paid to the support of students with English as an additional language, and these students, together with those with special educational needs, make unsatisfactory progress largely because of limited literacy skills. Achievement in terms of prior attainment is satisfactory in Years 10 and 11 and currently students in Year 10 have made a positive beginning to their GCSE course.
138. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. In lessons seen, some was unsatisfactory and some was very good. In the best lessons planning was detailed and clear learning objectives were set. An appropriate challenge was set for all, including those with language or learning difficulties and for the most able in the group, as was seen in a Year 8 lesson on development. In these lessons there were good work routines, useful resources and good monitoring by the teacher of work in progress. However, in far too many lessons the teacher talked for too long, set undemanding activities and failed to motivate the students, leading to lack of concentration and minimal learning. In these lessons the pace was slow, students were not involved sufficiently in their own learning, nor were they challenged to think for themselves. Students are passive learners, and over dependent upon their teacher for their learning. Not enough support is given in lessons to those with language difficulties and this is reflected in the lack of content in exercise books where students have skills too weak for them to make satisfactory notes or complete the written tasks set.

139. The management of the department is unsatisfactory in its failure to tackle most of the issues raised in the last inspection. Standards in all years are still well below national averages and strategies are not yet in place to raise attainment. Schemes of work are not detailed enough and do not adequately identify learning outcomes and the methods by which they can be achieved. Geography is an unpopular subject in the school and the take-up for GCSE is low and often includes students who failed to get their first choices. As was stated in the last inspection, most students understand little of the value of studying geography.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- Teaching.
- Leadership for the department, which is working successfully as a team.
- A clear commitment to raise standards and improve performance.
- Students' positive attitudes towards history.
- Recognition in the teaching of the ethnic diversity of the school and preparation of students to contribute to a multi-cultural and multi-faith society.

Areas for improvement

- The overall attainment of students.
- The marking and correction policy.
- The range of external activities and visits to support the curriculum.

140. In the past two years GCSE results in history have shown little variation. In 2001, the results attained were below the national average. Girls performed better than boys.
141. Inspection evidence shows that attainment by the end of Year 9 is below the national average. Students have a basic knowledge and understanding of events, personalities and key changes in the periods they are studying. All, including those with special educational needs, can respond to simple historical questions and select information from a variety of written and pictorial resources. Students appreciate that history is based on evidence and most understand the nature of bias. The majority of students have satisfactory listening and oral skills, but many lack good writing skills. Spelling is weak, grammar is uncertain and sentence construction is poor.
142. By Year 11, attainment remains below the national average. Students are more assured when organising and using historical facts in writing and discussion, and when identifying appropriate historical terms. However, most still have difficulty in identifying trends and synthesising historical information. Higher ability students are able to produce reasoned arguments and to challenge historical interpretations. They analyse information with increased skill and show appreciation of historical causation and consequence. Lower attaining students can draw simple conclusions when examining evidence and are able to use sources to support limited narratives.
143. The majority of students arrive at the school with low levels of literacy and few skills in the subject. Many enter the school mid-phase after Year 7. The department offers these new entrants appropriate support with materials developed to meet the needs of students of all levels of ability.
144. History is a popular subject, as reflected in the take up at GCSE. Students respect their teachers and most behave well in class. When prompted, they engage fully in group and class discussions. Most sustain their concentration during lessons and work with enthusiasm. They are particularly strongly motivated in developing historical ideas when using ICT. The majority of students in Years 7 to 9 are dependent on their teachers for their learning; by the end of Year 11, the more able students have become independent learners.

145. The quality of teaching is good. Without exception lessons were well planned and paced, and student tasks were appropriate and well focused. Lesson objectives are outlined and knowledge and skills are systematically consolidated. Substantial effort goes into the reinforcement of literacy skills, specifically by means of language building and writing tasks. Where feasible, ICT is used to stimulate and enhance learning.
146. All teachers are confident in their possession of good subject knowledge. By challenging students appropriately, for example through skilful questioning, they are able to encourage full participation, including that of students with special educational needs and English as an additional language. Much is done to help students to share and tolerate different ideas and viewpoints. Topics of study are carefully chosen to reflect the ethnic diversity of the classroom and to help students to understand their role as citizens in a multi-cultural and multi-faith society. Positive staff-student relationships contribute to effective classroom control.
147. The department is led most successfully by a dynamic new head. Clear objectives underpin a strong commitment to raise standards. Team morale is high and levels of cooperation are excellent, for example in cascading ICT skills. Teachers design and produce high quality teaching resources for departmental use. A coherent style ensures that students experience a consistency of approach.
148. Developments are under way to improve and computerize record keeping and the tracking of students' progress. Assessment practices are clearly defined. Regular homework is set, but opportunities are lost to enhance students' attainment, as marking, though constructive in tone, is shallow in content. Rewards and a positive praise culture are used to advantage.
149. Displays in the history area are designed to celebrate students' achievement. Opportunities exist to enhance the curriculum and cultural awareness by extending the range of external visits and visitors. Further access could be made to *virtual* museums, monuments etc., through the application of ICT. The department maintains a high profile in the school and contributes to cultural, social, ICT and literacy development.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in information and communication technology is **unsatisfactory**.

Strengths

- Good teaching.
- Good facilities.
- Good leadership.

Areas for improvement

- Provision of the full national curriculum entitlement.
- Regular assessment and monitoring of students' progress.
- Consistency and continuity in the quality of teaching between classes and year groups.

150. According to recent teacher assessments, students' attainment at the end of Year 9 is below the national average. Standards are good in Years 7 and 8. However, these standards are not maintained in Year 9.
151. By the end of Year 11, students' skills and understanding of many aspects of ICT are well below those which can be expected. There is no apparent difference between the attainment of boys and girls. Currently the students do not take a GCSE or GNVQ qualification in this subject.
152. In Years 7 to 9, standards have improved since the last inspection. They remain the same in Years 10 and 11. The rapidly improving facilities and quality of teaching are already beginning to raise standards. However, the requirements of the National Curriculum are still not being met.

153. By the end of Year 9, students can use a fully featured word processor to present information to include images and with a good layout, using different fonts and colours. Many can use 'PowerPoint' to present their work with moving graphics and changing screen displays.
154. By the end of Year 11, students regularly use the Internet and other computer based resources to gain access to information for their independent studies and GCSE projects in other subjects. They can enter data in a spreadsheet to display information graphically. Some can enter formulae to predict costs and outcomes of change. Others can use ICT to compose, play and edit their own musical compositions.

155. The quality of teaching is good in the lessons dedicated to ICT in Year 7 and in many lessons in other subjects where students use computers. There has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection as a result of extensive in-service training. The teachers have good subject knowledge relevant to the age range of their students.
156. Appropriate and challenging work is set. This is because there is the flexibility for students to complete their tasks so they can fulfil their need to explore and try out new ideas. All students receive good individual support ensuring that regardless of their learning needs, they are included in the learning process. To help in this process the school has successfully established an information and resource base on its network. This allows students and staff to freely gain access to information and learning materials whenever needed.
157. A Year 9 class was taught to an excellent standard when they were using ICT to learn French. The task was to produce a multi-media presentation in French using a specified tense. The students were very well supported as the teacher turned their enthusiasm to use ICT into a highly successful learning experience in both subjects.
158. Many students enjoy this subject and work for long periods of time, sustaining their concentration on the tasks set for them. They are enthusiastic and highly motivated and they can work on their own when required to do so. They are confident in their skills and they are prepared to explore new ideas and work creatively.
159. Consequently, the quality of learning is good in those aspects taught. In Year 7 students make very good progress with their studies. However, the incompleteness in the curriculum adversely affects the overall quality of learning beyond the Year 7. This has led to slow progress in students' acquisition of all the required skills' knowledge and understanding. However, the students have good skills in using ICT for the presentation of their project work in subjects such as media studies and technology. All students use ICT effectively when they produce their Record of Achievement.
160. The students do not fully develop their understanding in using computer simulation and modelling for problem solving and interpreting information using a data base application. They are not able to monitor and control a system through sensors and switches connected to the computer. Many students benefit from the good access to the Internet. They have produced their own web site that includes regularly updated news items.
161. ICT skills are developed further for students taking business studies in Year 10 and Year 11. They learn how to use a spreadsheet to model and predict business situations - for example, to find the break-even point from data of income and expenditure. Although GCSE results in this subject are below the national average there has been a steady improvement over the last two years. The quality of teaching in business studies is good.
162. Skills in literacy are developed, for example, when students give a short talk to the class accompanied by their PowerPoint presentation. Good attention is paid to the students' correct use of key words and the accuracy of technical explanations. ICT is also used to develop students' skills in modern foreign languages. Using e-mail, they are able to communicate with students in schools in Europe. ICT is used successfully to help students with special educational needs to help them, for example, to improve writing skills and numeracy. The computer rooms are available out of lesson times. Many students take this opportunity to extend their skills during these times.
163. Assessment matched to national curriculum levels of attainment is carried out regularly and to a good standard for students in Years 7 and 8. Students are assessed at the end of Year 8 and Year 9. Beyond this there is no formal system for regularly assessing students' learning in relation to all the National Curriculum levels of attainment. Beyond Year 7, students' progress is not monitored well enough to ensure consistency in their learning between different classes, subjects or year groups. In this aspect there has been no significant improvement since the last inspection in 1999.

164. A newly appointed subject co-ordinator has started to make the improvements required to ensure standards of work are raised. A full time network manager makes a valued contribution to the quality of learning. These factors and the substantial improvement in the computer facilities contribute significantly to the improvement since the last inspection.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

Strengths

- Improvement of GCSE results over the last three years, particularly in French.
- Good teaching is good and consequent students' learning.
- Very good leadership and management, aimed clearly at raising standards.
- Very good developmental work in teaching, literacy and writing skills.
- Most students' positive attitudes towards languages and very good behaviour.
- Rapidly developing provision for ICT.
- The department's encouragement of students to take examinations in their home languages.

Areas for improvement

- Establishing of firmer control of any challenging behaviour at an early stage.
- Ensuring greater use of the foreign language in the few lessons where too much English is spoken.
- Provision of overhead projectors and cassette recorders in every classroom, and blinds and television sets where necessary.

165. In 2000, the proportion of students gaining A* to C grades in GCSE examinations in French was just below the national average for all maintained schools. It was close to the national average for all comprehensive schools. Results for boys were higher than the national average for boys, and the gap between the performance of girls and boys was narrower than the national difference, even though girls' results were below the national average for girls. In German, results in 2000 were well below the national average. In 2001, results in French dipped, but in German they rose. Both sets of results remained below the national averages, but students did better in languages than in nearly all their other subjects. The department encourages students to take GCSE examinations in their home languages wherever possible. In 2000, over three quarters of the students who took such a GCSE examination gained a grade between A* and C. GCSE results in languages over the last three years have shown an upward trend overall.
166. The improvement since the last inspection has been good. GCSE results in both languages have risen, more particularly in French. Very good recent developmental work in teaching and learning has raised standards in speaking and writing. Progression through the National Curriculum levels is much clearer and students respond well, with good behaviour and positive attitudes towards languages.
167. In the lessons and work seen of students in Year 9, standards are now average overall. In 2000, the teacher assessments of students aged 14 were below the national average, but they improved in 2001. Students' attainment has improved over the past two years because of good use of new textbooks and new teaching approaches. Students have developed their writing skills well, particularly the higher attainers. These students use tenses well to write about events in the past and are beginning to use the future tense to write about what they are going to do. They understand how to use connecting words to make their accounts more interesting and can express their opinions about what they do in various contexts. Middle and lower attainers write much more simply, but make good use of the support they receive. In Years 7 to 9 written work is marked carefully, but more follow-up corrections and re-drafting by students would prepare them well for later coursework and assignments. Many students of all abilities take part very effectively in chorus-work and language-learning games, and many develop good accents. They mostly listen very well to tapes and understand their teachers' instructions in the foreign language, especially when, as is often the case, they have heard them used purposefully and

- regularly. When students hear the foreign language less often they are slower in recalling words and in responding appropriately.
168. Under new arrangements for the second foreign language in Year 8, 90 students have made a very good beginning in German and are making very good progress in all of the four required skills. They very much enjoy the extra challenge and interest.
169. The standards of work of current Year 11 students in lessons and in writing on display are just below the national average. At the age of 14 these students had been assessed as performing below national standards for their age. Nevertheless, higher-attaining 16-year-olds write at length, with appropriate detail, and a good level of grammatical accuracy. A few students show considerable flair and imagination in describing their holidays and families. Middle and lower attainers benefit from the supportive guidance of their teachers in preparing for their coursework and oral presentations. A small minority of students are slow to join in and practise chorus work and do not gain in confidence as they need to. Their written work is untidy and they sometimes struggle to remember words they have already come across.
170. Overall, students achieve well in languages and make good progress, given their below average attainment in core subjects on entry to the school.
171. The standard of teaching is good. In two-thirds of the lessons it was good or better, and in a small number was excellent. In about a quarter it was satisfactory, and in a small number was unsatisfactory because the management of the students was not firm enough.
172. The principal features of good teaching are: consistent use of the foreign language in the classroom to develop students' speaking and listening skills; effective planning of lessons to ensure that attainment targets are covered; and close attention to literacy skills, including good presentation and the appropriate use of grammar. Most of the teaching includes good initial oral presentation, followed by consolidation of vocabulary in a range of activities. In a Year 9 German class, for example, lower-attaining students learned very well in German how to talk about forms of transport and to use the past tense in doing so. Management of students is nearly always very effective; teachers ensure that students behave very well, so that all the class can concentrate and learn. In a Year 7 lesson, students learned how to talk about animals, and used their whiteboards enthusiastically to show how well they could spell the French words.
173. Although the teaching is good, overall, there are some areas where improvement is needed. Management of students' more challenging behaviour is not always firm enough, particularly when 'assertive discipline' is introduced too late to prevent behaviour getting worse. A few teachers do not use the foreign language in giving instructions for language games. Some teachers cannot draw on a full range of teaching activities in every lesson, because they have to share overhead projectors and, in one case, a cassette-recorder.
174. Students' attitudes to languages are good and they behave very well, overall. They listen carefully and are attentive. The response to study visits to France and Germany is good, and students appreciate the extra lunch-hour speaking sessions run by the well-deployed and effective language assistants. The gifted and talented students enjoy extra opportunities to learn Spanish, and have attended a European Day at Newham School.
175. The department is managed and led very well with the clear aim of raising the standard of students' performance. Documentation is very carefully thought out, with excellent analyses of school data about students' performance, and thorough planning for the improvement of teaching and learning, particularly the teaching of boys. Schemes of work have been revised in detail, as have procedures for monitoring teaching, marking, and students' targets and progress through the National Curriculum levels. The appropriate use of ICT to promote learning in languages is developing rapidly. However, recent staff absence and shortages in essential teaching equipment in some classrooms have affected standards adversely. Accommodation on two sites is unsatisfactory, but teachers have worked very hard over the past two years to create a stimulating language learning environment in each classroom.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- Good teaching standards in Years 7 to 9.
- The attitudes of students aged 11 –14.
- The extra-curricular provision.
- The provision for new technology.

Areas for improvement

- Greater emphasis on singing in Years 7 to 9.
- Time for the subject in Years 7 to 9.
- Improvement of GCSE schemes of work.

176. Students come to the school with poor attainment in general and have little experience of music. By Year 9 they have made satisfactory progress, although attainment is below average for boys and girls, with girls performing better than boys. Recent GCSE results have fallen from average and above average to below the standards reached by students in similar schools. However, the great majority of GCSE students achieve significantly higher results in this subject than in other subjects.
177. Teaching standards are satisfactory, overall. In Years 7 to 9 teaching standards are good and sometimes excellent. Lessons are well planned, expectations are high, students are well managed and teachers have good knowledge of the subject. Standards of learning at this level are good, overall. Students make sustained efforts and know what they have to do to improve. In a Year 9 lesson students worked very hard on a challenging listening task and made excellent progress. The lesson was energetically paced and the task had been broken down into bite-sized pieces. Students could demonstrate how they could perform any major or minor chord and made impressive efforts to analyse the effects of these chords. In a Year 7 keyboard lesson students made good progress as the lesson started with detailed questioning about the previous lesson. They then had the opportunity to practise in groups and they gained confidence as the teacher gave advice.
178. Teaching in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory. Teachers show good subject knowledge and make good use of resources. The pace of teaching is satisfactory and students are well managed. At this level students show satisfactory standards of learning and have good basic skills in using new technology. They work well on their own and many make sustained creative efforts to improve their compositions. Where students have the opportunity to develop a range of skills some students make good progress within a lesson. Students with special need make good progress in all years.
179. The attitudes of students in Years 7 to 9 are good. They work well together and appreciate the opportunities that the department offers them. Students enjoy performing and listen to each other with respect. The attitudes of GCSE students are satisfactory. Some students come to lessons ready to work but others take time to settle to the tasks in hand. They enjoy performing together. Behaviour is good at both levels.
180. The department makes good provision for the social and cultural education of students, with regular rehearsals for the choir, orchestra, African drumming group, Steel Band and keyboard club. The department puts on two concerts a year and is involved with performing arts productions in the school. In addition, a small number of students take up instrument lessons.
181. The school has not been able to appoint a full time head of department and relies on relatively inexperienced part-time teacher to manage the department. He has identified some immediate priorities but the subject needs an experienced full-time subject leader. There is an over reliance on part-time staff. Staff reflect well the cultural diversity of the school. The subject curriculum

meets the needs of its students and the ICT curriculum makes a unique contribution to the basic skills of its students. However, there are too few opportunities for students to develop their singing in Years 7 to 9. The timetable arrangements are such that students in these age groups do not have enough time to make sufficient progress. Staff have received appropriate training in the subject and their teaching is effectively monitored.

182. The standard of resources and accommodation is good and is particularly good for teaching new technology.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Teaching and learning: teachers plan lessons using a range of activities that allows all groups of students to learn successfully.
- Leadership and management.
- Extra-curricular provision.
- Students working very well together and sharing ideas freely.
- High participation rates in lessons.
- Effective strategies to improve students' numeracy and literacy skills.

Areas for improvement

- Inadequate indoor accommodation.
- Restoration of the school's grassed pitches.
- Learning support assistants in GCSE theory lessons.
- Links with outside sports clubs, to have access to specialist coaches.

183. Overall, standards in physical education are in line with national averages at the end of Years 9 and 11. This represents satisfactory achievement given these students' attainment on entry. GCSE examination results have varied over the last three years. In 1999 and 2000, no student gained a grade in the A* to C range. In 2001, the proportion of students gaining such a grade was in line with the national average and all seventeen students achieved a pass grade. Higher numbers (53) are entered for the 2002 examination. High attaining students, including the talented, achieve well in extra-curricular sport. Many boys and girls perform well at borough, regional and sometimes, national levels; particularly in football, netball, cricket and athletics.
184. By Year 9, standards in lessons and work are average and show satisfactory improvement from work in Year 7; most students are therefore achieving satisfactorily. The good extra-curricular programme allows talented boys and girls to achieve well. Students with special educational needs and English as an additional language achieve well by Years 9 and 11. Teaching is appropriately adapted to meet their needs. Most Year 9 students judge performance well; they use satisfactory individual skills and spatial awareness to beat opponents. They confidently use heart rate monitoring equipment to improve their understanding of fitness issues. Higher attaining students by Year 9 use good numeracy skills to evaluate fitness test data. They plan and use tactics effectively. Lower attainers often show satisfactory individual skills, in isolation, but cannot apply them effectively in a game. Below-average hand-eye co-ordination limits some students' progress in badminton.
185. By Year 11, standards are average and achievement is satisfactory in relation to standards at the beginning of Year 10. Some students are achieving high levels in representative sport. They demonstrate very good levels of skill, tactical awareness and fitness. Most students plan performance satisfactorily, particularly tactics in games and racket sports. They use knowledge of fitness principles to plan sport-specific training programmes. Lower attainers in Year 11 GCSE theory groups, including some students with special educational needs and English as an additional language, show below-average levels of literacy skills. Most students, across all years,

express themselves well, owing to teachers' strong emphasis on oral participation. Most students' numeracy skills are good; they cope well in measuring, recording and analysing fitness testing data. Their ICT skills in the subject, by Year 9, are satisfactory and by Year 11, are good. Year 11 GCSE students carry out research tasks using ICT; higher attainers use it to analyse and summarise data.

186. The quality of teaching and learning is good in all years. In one out of three lessons observed, it was very good or excellent. Students' attitudes and behaviour are good. They work hard and want to do well; as a result, their learning is often good. Small numbers underachieve, because of poor concentration. Teachers' very good management of students creates a purposeful and safe learning environment. Continuity and progress are good across the age-range, because of challenging teaching and schemes of work that build on previous learning. In a Year 9 badminton lesson, lower attaining students progressed well, because the teacher simplified instructions, modified tasks and used demonstrations. The learning of higher attainers, including the talented, is accelerated by extension tasks, grouping and extra-curricular activities. Teachers provide opportunities for students to learn independently in a high percentage of lessons. In a Year 7 hockey lesson, students planned skills drills, performed, and judged others' performance. Students' achievement and progress in such tasks are good. When the opportunities for active learning are more limited, progress by some, particularly lower attainers, is not as good. Students are developing good numeracy skills through opportunities to measure, record and analyse fitness performance data. Most students learn and use technical vocabulary well, because of teachers' emphasis on key words; oral communication skills are developing well, through the many opportunities to plan and evaluate work. Teachers provide good opportunities for students to develop their ICT skills, particularly to resource information and support fitness testing.
187. Leadership and management are good. The new head of department is providing clear vision in the subject's development, particularly in curricular aspects, teaching and learning, and systems to monitor, evaluate and improve standards. A dedicated team of specialists provides very good support. Assessment systems are good and data are well used to set realistic targets for students. The subject makes a good contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Teachers have very good relationships with students and this is reflected in students' positive attitudes to physical education.
188. The department has made good progress since the last inspection. Good teaching has been maintained. GCSE examination results are greatly improved; strong curricular links have been established with partner primary schools and a floodlit astro pitch is in place. In order to improve further, the department needs to overcome two major constraints; the inadequate indoor accommodation and the lack of grassed pitches for games.

DANCE

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

Strengths

- All teaching by specialists.
- Teachers' creation of a stimulating learning environment.
- High motivation of students.
- Well-equipped dance studio.

Areas for improvement

- GCSE examination results – considerable 'drop' in 2001, mainly owing to staffing problems.

189. GCSE Dance examination results at the higher grades, in the last three years, are well-below the national trend. Approximately 20 students, predominately girls, normally follow the GCSE course.
190. Standards in a small sample of lessons and work seen in Years 7 and 8 were above average. Most students, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional

language, are achieving well. They plan and perform their own movement compositions and judge the quality of others. Higher attainers' performances are characterised by imagination and fluency.

191. Standards in lessons and work seen from GCSE examination groups are in line with national expectations by Year 11; some students will exceed them. Most students' work is expressive and energetic; they plan and evaluate performance well. Higher attainers perform more complex dances using advanced techniques and skills. Lower attainers' work shows less expression and below-average body management skills.
192. The quality of teaching and learning is excellent throughout. The two recently appointed dance specialists show real teaching expertise. Their style is warm, confident and stimulating. Excellent use is made of audio and visual support equipment and the newly designed dance studio helps create a first-class learning environment. The learning of higher attainers, including the talented, is accelerated by opportunities to plan for and perform at outside venues. Students with special needs receive excellent ancillary support.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Teaching. It is always satisfactory, mostly good and occasionally very good.
- Very good student management.
- Good departmental management.
- Good curricular provision.
- Good contributions towards the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students.
- Good monitoring of teaching and student work.

Areas for improvement

- Standards in Years 10-and 11.
- The setting of detailed targets against which students' progress can be identified and sharing these with students.
- The assessment of attitudes, values and the spiritual dimension.

193. Attainment in Years 7 to 9 is in line with the expectations of the Newham LEA Agreed syllabus. In Years 10 and 11, attainment is just below expectations in the GCSE short course.
194. In lessons and work seen during the inspection, attainment in Years 7 to 9 was consistent with expected levels. There are some good examples of students developing their knowledge and understanding of religious language, principles and concepts such as creation, evil and suffering. Students generally make sense of what they study and can relate it to their experiences of life. In Year 7, students study religious education as part of humanities. The integrated course enables students to relate religion and civilisations successfully. In Year 8, students developed a good understanding of rites of passage. The teacher's use of an excellent video of a Sikh wedding enabled students to explore the way in which religious beliefs influence the choices that people make. Good discussion work assisted students to explore a variety of views and develop attitudes towards the concept of arranged marriage. In Year 9, students explored the sanctity of human life and, through the teacher's confidence in handling very sensitive material on abortion, were able to develop attitudes, explore feelings and make sound judgements. They were able to provide useful links with everyday experiences. Students with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. The use of key words, technical language and good discussion work were useful aids to improve literacy and oral competence. Overall, learning is good.
195. In Years 10 and 11, attainment falls short of national expectations. In Year 10, students on the GCSE course achieve well, and their attainment is in line with national expectations, and in some cases exceeds it. They show a good understanding of issues such as scientific views of the origin

of the universe and attitudes to suffering. The Jewish and Christian concepts of suffering were well used by the teacher to enable students to develop sound attitudes and present balanced arguments. There were very good opportunities for students to reflect on forms of suffering through the skilful use of the song "Imagine" by John Lennon. This enabled students to explore their feelings about the causes of suffering. They are good at linking Christian principles with life experiences, and can make judgement and develop attitudes. In Year 11, attainment is below national expectations but achievement is satisfactory. The teacher's use of effective discussion and an excellent video about life in South Africa provided good opportunities for students to explore the importance of a Christian response to racism and forgiveness. Students produced good balanced arguments for and against the need to forgive others. Overall, learning is good.

196. There are no significant differences in the standards achieved by students of different sex or ethnic background. Students with special educational needs, those with English as an additional language and those who are gifted or talented make satisfactory progress.
197. Overall, students' attitudes to learning are very good. They behave very well, are generally well motivated and apply themselves to the work. They collaborate well with each other and work at a productive pace. The relationship between teachers and students is good, and teachers support individuals both academically and personally. Students' behaviour makes a very good contribution to achievement and progress.
198. Teaching is always satisfactory, in many cases good and occasionally very good. Planning is good, and this helps students to focus on information learnt in previous lessons. Lesson aims are always shared with students. Teachers make good use of questioning to consolidate current learning and to review previous work. They use a suitable range of styles such as discussion, use of video and audio material and worksheets that match the needs of individual students. These enable students to learn from as well as learn about religion, and helps them to maintain their interest and develop understanding of religious principles and concepts. Resources are well used, especially worksheets. These enable students with different needs to learn well. Teachers manage students' behaviour very well, contributing to a good climate for learning. Extension work and homework are used to good effect in allowing students to reflect on the information they have gained in class. Teachers have clear expectations of students and challenge them to succeed, and these are effective in contributing to student achievement. Assessment of students' work is generally satisfactory and very helpful comments are made in exercise books. The procedures provide a sound basis for assessing what students know and understand. Assessment informs the teaching and learning cycle and the planning of new work. The department sets targets, but they tend to be general and not related to levels of attainment. Consequently, students are unclear about the standards they are reaching and what they need to do to improve. This is recognised as an area for development.
199. The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 is broad, balanced and meets the needs of the students and the requirements of the Newham LEA Agreed Syllabus. The schemes of work are appropriate and are linked to the fundamental aims of the syllabus designed to assist students both to learn about and learn from religion. Lesson plans are very good, and provide sufficient flexibility to allow for staff initiative and planning for the range of abilities in class groups. This enables students to have the opportunity to reflect on the information they gain in lessons. In Years 10 and 11, students follow the GCSE short course, and a few students attend extra lessons in order to be entered for the full GCSE examination. The course provides a sound curriculum that is in line with the agreed syllabus requirements. This provides continuity with the syllabus in Years 7 to 9. The department should consider whether the GCSE course is appropriate for all students in the light of the 2001 results. Religious education makes a valuable contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students, providing opportunities for students to explore world issues of justice, relationships and personal beliefs. In lessons, the teaching encourages students to explore their personal views about religious and moral issues, and work on the major world religions necessitates discussion about the cultures that support them, so preparing students for life in a multi-faith and multi-cultural society.

200. The department is well managed, with a clear sense of purpose and direction. Students are provided with a rich diet of religious education in all year groups. The head of the department approaches the task with enthusiasm and commitment. There is excellent support from other departmental staff. Planning is very good. Support and in-service training for all departmental staff is a significant part of departmental planning. This will enhance students' attainment. The departmental development plan sets appropriate priorities. It will form a sound basis for future action. Documentation is very good. There are regular formal meetings of the humanities department. They form the basis for the discussion of important issues relating to student attainment and progress. Accommodation is very good, with a suite of three rooms. The quality of display that celebrates students' achievement is very high. Curriculum resources are generally good. The department makes good use of computers to enable all students to learn appropriately, to conduct research and to assist with presentation of material.
201. Since the last inspection, attainment in Years 7 to 9 has improved. Good improvements have been made in planning and in the schemes of work. The assessment procedures have improved, although the use of assessment to inform students about the levels they have reached and what they need to do to improve requires further development. There has been a significant improvement in the contribution religious education now makes to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students. Overall, the improvements since the last inspection have had a good impact on standards, students' achievement and progress.

MEDIA STUDIES

Overall, the quality of provision in media studies is **good**.

Strengths

- The good quality of teaching and students' good progress.
- Examination results: they show a continuing increase in numbers of students gaining A* to C grades over the past two years.
- Very good subject knowledge of the specialist teachers.

Areas for improvement

- The requirements of students with additional learning needs.
- Seeking of parental guidance and consent in the choice of video films to be used.

202. Media studies is an examination option for 15 and 16 year-olds. Examination results over the last two years indicate a steady increase in the number of A* to C grade passes, and in 2001, the numbers of these exceeded national averages. From an analysis of the students' completed modules, the standards of work seen indicate that, in forthcoming examinations, the students will continue to gain good pass grades. Media studies is a well established option for Year 10 students, all of whom complete the required written coursework by the end of their first year, leaving the final year for their practical coursework.
203. The quality of teaching and learning is good, overall. All the teachers are media studies specialists, which allows them to teach with confidence and this is reflected in the subject's increasing popularity and success. Lessons are well planned and prepared, and there is an enthusiastic element of fun, which retains students' interest. Lessons are well paced, promoting good levels of concentration, although sometimes, video clips are too short to allow students to fully grasp the concept. For example, a series of very brief extracts from the film, *The Omen*, gave too little time for students to fully appreciate the setting and mood caused by the music, and this was evident in their oral responses. The majority of students respond well during lessons, working hard and taking care with their presentation. However, a small minority is inattentive and talkative. The teachers' management of students' behaviour is generally good, with effective pause controls in oral sessions, which gently remind students to listen and pay attention and listen. In-class support for those with additional learning needs is effective, although there are not enough

supporting resources such as laptop computers for these students. However, effective use is made of the computer suite to support learning

204. Subject documentation is well organised, with long-term and short-term schemes of work matched to examination requirements. However, the choice of videos in the film section could cause some distress or offence to some students, and parental guidance is something the department should consider when making its choices. Attempts to raise the attainment of boys are helped by the seating and grouping arrangements, and attention to the dynamics of the classroom. Assessment is ongoing through coursework, and this is well analysed to inform curricular development and estimate predicted examination results. The department is linked to English and therefore has a good range of appropriate resources to support the subject.

205. Since the last inspection examination results have continued to improve. Staffing numbers and expertise have improved and effective use is now made of modern technology to support learning. The students now make good gains in the subject. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good.

SOCIOLOGY

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

Strengths

- The good quality of teaching and students' good progress.
- Examination results show a continuing increase in A* to C passes over three years.

Areas for improvement

- Attracting of more boys to selecting this examination option by reviewing the coursework requirements.
- Catering for students with special needs and English as a second language.

206. Sociology is offered as an examination option to 15 and 16 year-olds. It is more popular with girls than boys. Examination results over the last three years indicate a steady increase in the number of A* to C grade passes, and in 2001, the numbers of these exceeded national averages and was higher than other subject areas within the school.
207. The quality of teaching and learning is good, overall. Lessons are well planned and prepared, and there is an enthusiastic element of fun, which retains students' interest. Lessons are well paced, promoting good levels of concentration. The teachers' high expectations strongly support the students' social and personal development by encouraging independent research into such issues as Marxist theories on crime, for example. The students respond with very well considered arguments and presentations, during which they reply to questions and comments from their peers. There are good levels of support among peers and evidence of shared collaboration. In some lessons, although the quality of planning is good, not enough consideration is given to supporting students with special needs or those who have English as a second language. Consequently, these students do not achieve as well as their peers.
208. Subject documentation is well organised, with schemes of work matched to examination requirements. Raising the attainment of boys is being helped by the seating and grouping arrangements, with weaker students working alongside higher achievers. Assessment of coursework, and this is well analysed to inform curricular development and to estimate predicted examination results. The department is linked to humanities and therefore has good resources in terms of textbooks to support the subject. Students are encouraged to develop their work through Internet research in the computer suite. The subject has maintained the good standards it achieved under the last inspection and continues to be good, overall.