

## **INSPECTION REPORT**

### **STOCKWELL PARK HIGH SCHOOL**

London

LEA area: Lambeth

Unique reference number: 100626

Headteacher: Ms J Tapper

Reporting inspector: I D Thompson  
12271

Dates of inspection: 11 – 14 February 2002

Inspection number: 222016

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11-16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Clapham Road Stockwell London
Postcode:	SW9 OAL
Telephone number:	020 77336156
Fax number:	020 77386196
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr A Alabi
Date of previous inspection:	7 February 2000

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
12271	I D Thompson	Registered inspector		Information about the school. The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
11077	J Harrison	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
8341	W Wimshurst	Team inspector	Mathematics	
19913	R Garrett	Team inspector	English	
1223	A Piggott	Team inspector	Science	
15051	L Kauffman	Team inspector	Design and technology; information and communication technology; equality of opportunity	
31685	V Girling	Team inspector	Art and design	
7465	R Brent	Team inspector	Geography	
12328	P Mitchell	Team inspector	History	
20412	D Shepherd	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
31705	J Mason	Team inspector	Music	
2141	J Oxley	Team inspector	Physical education	
12003	A Marfleet	Team inspector	Religious education	
30982	B Barnes	Team inspector	Provision for pupils with special educational needs; provision for pupils with English as an additional language	

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London WC2B 6SE

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Stockwell Park High School is an average sized, mixed, 11-16 comprehensive school that serves a very disadvantaged area of South London. There are 802 pupils on roll – many more boys than girls. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average and higher than at the time of the previous inspection. Almost half of the pupils are from homes where English is not the first language. Pupils come from a wide range of ethnic minority backgrounds and speak more than 50 different languages. About one-third of pupils are at an early stage of learning English. In most years there is a higher than average number of pupils who join the school or leave it at other than the usual times. Pupils' standards when they join the school are very low overall. The proportions of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs and with a Statement of Special Educational Need are well above average.

The headteacher has been in post since September 2000. Over the last four years, the school has gone through a period of considerable change, including four headteachers and a very high level of staff turnover. The school has difficulty in recruiting suitably qualified specialist teachers.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is an improving school, which provides a sound education and has a good capacity to improve further. Pupils of all levels of attainment and backgrounds make good progress as a result of good teaching. Although well below average, standards are improving. GCSE results are in line with those of similar schools and above average in relation to pupils' prior attainment. The school is very well led and managed and provides satisfactory value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Standards are rising as a result of very good leadership of the headteacher and senior staff.
- The school's aims and values are reflected in all its work and there is a positive atmosphere.
- Pupils from all backgrounds get on well together.
- Provision for pupils' personal development is good.
- The provision for extra-curricular activities is very good.

#### **What could be improved**

- Attendance is unsatisfactory and the major hindrance to progress.
- Weaknesses in the curriculum affect learning in humanities, information and communication technology (ICT), modern foreign languages and physical education.
- Arrangements for teaching numeracy are unsatisfactory in subjects across the school.
- Assessment is not used well enough to support pupils' progress or to monitor their performance.
- Reports do not give parents enough information about how well their children are doing and what they need to do to improve.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school has made good progress since the previous inspection in 2000 when there were serious weaknesses in standards and behaviour. Standards show considerable improvement from a very low base. Behaviour is much improved. Teaching has improved. Provision for pupils' personal development has improved. Weaknesses in the curriculum remain to be tackled. Attendance is unsatisfactory and much the same.

## 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			
	All schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
GCSE examinations	E	E*	E	C

<b>Key</b>	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Pupils' performance in the 2001 national tests at the end of Year 9 was well below average in English and science and very low in mathematics. Overall results put the school in the lowest five per cent of schools nationally and were very low in comparison with schools taking pupils from similar social and economic backgrounds. Over the last five years, results have improved at a slower rate than found nationally but showed a considerable improvement in 2001. In relation to pupils' very low standards when they entered the school, these results represent satisfactory achievement overall. The results of GCSE examinations in 2001 were well below average but showed a considerable improvement over previous years and matched those of similar schools. In relation to pupils' standards at the end of Year 9, these results were above average and represent good achievement.

In work seen during the inspection, by the end of Year 9, standards are well below average overall but represent good achievement in relation to pupils' very low standards when they enter the school. Overall standards are better than previous test results because of the improvement in the learning atmosphere of the school and improved teaching. The only subject in which pupils' progress is less than satisfactory is modern foreign languages, largely because teachers do not match tasks sufficiently well to pupils' needs. Standards are well below average in English and science and very low in mathematics. In other subjects, standards are average in physical education, below average in design and technology, ICT, music and religious education. They are well below average in all other subjects. By the end of Year 11, standards are about average in design and technology and physical education. They are below average in art and design, ICT and religious education and well below average in all other subjects. These standards represent satisfactory achievement in relation to pupils' standards at the end of Year 9. Standards of literacy are below average and standards of numeracy are well below average. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well. Their progress is at least satisfactory in all subjects and it is good in about half of them. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make good progress overall. There was little difference in the performance of pupils from different ethnic groups, but there was some underachievement by Portuguese pupils and Black Caribbean boys overall.

The school sets appropriately challenging targets based on pupils' earlier learning.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory. The majority of pupils are keen to learn and play and active part in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. Behaviour is much improved. The rate of exclusion is high reflecting the school's determination to set and maintain standards.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils gain in confidence and respond well to opportunities to take responsibility. There is a good deal of mutual respect in the school.
Attendance	Poor.



Attendance shows little sign of improving despite the school's efforts and has a big effect on many pupils' overall achievement. There is a good degree of racial harmony in the school - pupils from all backgrounds get on well together.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

In all years, teaching is good in English and satisfactory in mathematics and science. The overall quality of teaching and the learning that it promotes is good. Overall, teaching meets pupils' diverse needs well – including those of pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. Occasionally, such as in French and mathematics, methods used are not sufficiently well matched to pupils' needs. The main strengths of teaching are in planning, the management of pupils' behaviour and the way in which teachers promote the school's wider aims and values through the teaching of their subjects. Support staff make a valuable contribution to the quality of learning and the majority of teachers involve them in planning. Most pupils are keen to learn and respond well, which helps their learning. Absence interferes with the continuity of learning for many pupils and creates difficulties for teachers in trying to ensure that pupils catch up with work they have missed. Low levels of literacy skills hinder progress across the school.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Unsatisfactory. Pupils do not receive their entitlement in some subjects. Very good provision is made for extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory overall. A good range of provision has some weaknesses in efficiency, which reduce its impact. Support staff make a considerable contribution to pupils' progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory but currently restricted by the lack of a co-ordinator. Pupils are well integrated into school life.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The school makes good provision for spiritual and moral development and very good provision for social and cultural development. Pupils are encouraged to develop confidence in themselves and to realise their potential.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school looks after pupils well. Procedure for promoting good behaviour work well. Pupils are given good personal support. Assessment procedures are satisfactory but the use of assessment is unsatisfactory in supporting planning and promoting progress.

The school has a satisfactory partnership with parents. Considerable effort has been put into enlisting their support but the high level of absence indicates that this has not been fully successful. Reports do not give parents enough information about pupils' progress. Weaknesses in the curriculum affect learning in a number of subjects and statutory requirements are not met in respect of cross-curricular

ICT, modern foreign languages, physical education and religious education. The frequency of acts of collective worship does not meet requirements.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher has established a clear focus on raising standards, well supported by senior staff. Middle management is broadly satisfactory.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. The governing body has a good knowledge of the school but fails to meet some statutory requirements.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Senior staff monitor the performance of departments and of individual teachers. Where possible, the school makes use of external validation to verify its findings.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school targets its spending effectively and makes good use of grants to raise standards.

The headteacher has established a commitment to improvement and is driving the school hard to raise standards. The principles of best value are applied well. Learning is affected by a few weaknesses in middle management, mostly because of long-term absence but in modern foreign languages because of a failure to secure improvement. The school's accommodation is unsatisfactory and does not meet its needs. The match of staff to the school's need is unsatisfactory, mainly because of difficulties of recruitment. Resources for learning are adequate.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Very few parents attended the meeting or returned the questionnaire so that findings from those sources are not securely representative and should be treated with some caution.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like the school.</li> <li>• Teaching is good.</li> <li>• The school is approachable.</li> <li>• Pupils are expected to work hard and do their best.</li> <li>• Management is good.</li> <li>• The school makes good provision for pupils' personal development.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The use and amount of homework are inconsistent.</li> <li>• Behaviour.</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with parents' positive views. Behaviour has improved and is generally satisfactory. Homework seen during the inspection was generally satisfactory in amount and content.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1. Since the previous inspection, standards have improved from a very low base. A number of factors have affected achievement and contributed to the slower rate of progress made by older pupils. Erratic attendance interferes with the progress of many pupils but the effect is most marked among older pupils. Over recent years, the school has gone through a period of great change in management and staffing. About three-quarters of the staff are new to the school since the previous inspection. Although the programme of support for and monitoring of teaching has secured an improvement in teaching, with a consequent effect on standards, nevertheless such a high level of turnover has inevitably interfered with the continuity of pupils' learning. Pupils who have been in the school longest have been affected most. Since her appointment in 2000, the headteacher has been successful in creating a better atmosphere for learning – pupils' attitudes and behaviour have improved. Younger pupils have benefited from a more settled situation during their time at the school.
2. The results of National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 in 2001 put the school in the lowest five per cent of schools nationally and were very low in comparison with schools taking pupils from similar social and economic backgrounds. Over the last five years, results have improved at a slower rate than found nationally. Nevertheless, results in 2001 showed a considerable improvement, from a very low base, in the proportions of pupils reaching the level expected for their age in English and science over the previous year. Results in mathematics fell back slightly. In relation to pupils' very low standards when they entered the school, these results represent satisfactory achievement overall. Girls did much better than boys in English and slightly better in science. Boys did slightly better in mathematics.
3. In GCSE examinations in 2001, results were well below average for the proportions of pupils gaining five or more grades A\*-C, five or more grades A\*-G and one or more grades A\*-G. In comparison with similar schools, results were well above average for the proportion gaining five or more grades A\*-C and broadly average overall. In relation to pupils' standards at the end of Year 9, these results were above average and represent good progress in Years 10 and 11. Although results have improved at a slower rate than nationally, there has been a marked improvement from the very low base of 2000 when the school's results were in the lowest five per cent nationally. This is clearly illustrated by the fact that the proportion of pupils gaining five or more grades A\*-C in 2001 was more than double the figure for 2000 and exceeded the school's target. Results at the other two benchmarks, although improved, were below the targets. Girls did better than boys. There was little difference in the performance of pupils from different ethnic groups, but there was some underachievement by Portuguese pupils and African-Caribbean boys overall. The school recognises the need for improved monitoring and mentoring of boys' performance in general and particularly for African-Caribbean boys. Pupils' best performance in relation to their other subjects was in art and design; their worst performance was in communication studies.
4. In work seen during the inspection, standards by the end of Year 9 are well below average overall but represent good achievement in relation to pupils' very low standards when they enter the school. Overall standards are better than previous test results because of the improvement in the learning atmosphere of the school and improved teaching. The only subject in which pupils' progress is less than satisfactory is modern foreign languages, largely because teachers do not match tasks sufficiently well to pupils' needs. Standards are well below average in English and in science and very low in mathematics. In other subjects, standards are average in physical education, below average in design and technology, information and communication technology (ICT), music and religious education. They are well below average in all other subjects.

5. By the end of Year 11, standards are about average in design and technology and physical education. They are below average in art and design, ICT and religious education and well below average in all other subjects. These standards represent satisfactory achievement in relation to pupils' standards at the end of Year 9. The high rate of absence has a marked effect on the achievement of many pupils in Years 10 and 11. This group of pupils moved up through the school during a period of very high staff turnover that interfered with the continuity of their learning.
6. Standards of literacy are well below average and affect pupils' progress. School policy has improved and the school has introduced a range of measures to improve standards, such as after-school and weekend reading clubs. The library provides bi-lingual dictionaries and a good selection of fiction and non-fiction books suitable for pupils of all levels of attainment, including pupils at an early stage of learning English and those with special educational needs. A teaching and learning group supports the literacy co-ordinator in developing literacy across the school. Good progress has been made in a relatively short time but teachers' application of policy is inconsistent so that the potential benefits to pupils' standards are not yet fully realised.
7. Standards of numeracy are well below average. The low levels found in mathematics lessons are reflected in most other subjects. Few departments plan to use the opportunities that arise in all subjects to enhance pupils' numeracy skills, partly because there is no whole-school policy to guide them. Consequently, pupils lack confidence in using number and measurement.
8. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well. Their progress is at least satisfactory in all subjects and it is good in half of them, including in English and science. Pupils make such progress because teachers and learning support assistants give pupils a great deal of effective help and encouragement, in and out of lessons. Pupils respond well. When progress is good, it is because teachers consistently plan their lessons to meet the needs of all pupils and have developed good teamwork with support staff. In design and technology, for example, pupils' skills are developed well using a step-by-step approach and the pupils are encouraged to reflect at the end of the lesson on how well they have co-operated with others in the class. They learn how a good attitude towards other people helps them to do their work well. In English, the support staff make sure that pupils know clearly what is expected of them. Pupils receiving additional support in small classes in Years 7 and 8 make good and sometimes very good progress in lessons, especially in literacy, because of good teaching and the use of good learning materials. Pupils with a formal Statement of Special Educational Need generally meet their targets in their individual educational plans, helped by additional support in lessons, which continues through senior school. Progress is hampered by the poor attendance of some pupils, and it could be better still for many pupils with special educational needs, if the school's resources were used more efficiently.
9. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make good progress overall. Progress is good in the same subjects as it is for pupils with special educational needs. This is because of good practice and support in these subjects. In addition, pupils studying a modern foreign language at GCSE level also achieve well, because of the good skills they have acquired in learning languages. Teachers across the school focus well on talk in their lessons. This is helpful for pupils learning English as an additional language, as it provides them with good models of spoken English and allows them to practise their own language skills. Staff attend well to the need to explain phrases, such as 'by word of mouth'. Pupils often help each other to understand an unfamiliar word or phrase using their first language. The progress of pupils at very early stages of learning English as an additional language is currently constrained by a staff shortage this term. Nevertheless, these pupils still make at least satisfactory progress because of overall good teaching across subjects, the flexible support of learning support staff and competent small group teaching from a specialist teacher temporarily re-deployed from support in subject lessons.

## **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

10. Since the previous inspection, there has been a considerable improvement in pupils' attitudes and behaviour; they are now satisfactory. A small number of pupils do have challenging and difficult behaviour. They are usually well managed and do not have an undue influence on the school's orderly atmosphere. However, in occasional lessons, the behaviour of a minority of pupils hinders the learning of all. The overall levels of exclusions for unacceptable behaviour are high, reflecting the school's determination to set and maintain appropriate standards.
11. Whilst there have been many improvements to attitudes and behaviour, the poor attendance of some pupils is still a serious concern. Attendance at the school is around 88 per cent, which is well below the national average. Levels of unauthorised absence are three times the national average. The school was unable to provide an analysis of the attendance for last year, but there appears to be a declining pattern of attendance as pupils become older. The main reasons for absence, besides illness, are a lack of value for education and periods of exclusion for poor behaviour.
12. In lessons, pupils generally work willingly and are keen to try their best. They respond very well to the rewards and recognition they receive for good work. Pupils are interested in the targets they are set for improvement and try to meet them. They are pleased with the way their teachers are willing to help them outside of lessons. However, there are some pockets of unsatisfactory behaviour and attitudes, more often amongst the younger pupils, many of whom enter the school with poorly developed social skills. Pupils with special educational needs in small class lessons display a good attitude towards their work. In an excellent Year 7 lesson for pupils with special educational needs, the pupils took pleasure in doing their very best for their teacher, and thanked her at the end of the lesson. Several even asked for more homework, even though they had some to do already. During the inspection, the after-school reading club was well attended and the pupils taking part displayed a serious attitude to their work. Some pupils attend literacy support classes run by school staff on Saturday mornings. Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties have good relationships with support staff, including mentors. This is particularly effective in the pupil support centre where very good staff-pupil relationships based on mutual respect provide the foundation and take-off point for pupils in danger of being excluded to re-evaluate and redress their emotional and behavioural difficulties.
13. Pupils are clear about the school's code of conduct, which they consider fair. As part of the school's recent drive to improve standards of behaviour, there has been a very high number of permanent and fixed term exclusions. In the year before the inspection there were 81 fixed period exclusions and five permanent. In the current year there have already been 10 permanent exclusions and 76 fixed period. This is well above the levels expected and reflects the considerable challenge to authority that some pupils at the school pose. A significant number of the pupils excluded permanently were boys and many were from African-Caribbean backgrounds. All exclusions have been carefully considered and are consistent with the aim of maintaining appropriate standards in the school.
14. Relationships throughout the school have improved since the previous inspection and are good. Many pupils show a good degree of respect for their teachers and form tutors. Pupils show respect and concern for others in the 'thought for the day' at tutor times, assemblies and by the way they raise money for charities.
15. There is relatively little bullying at the school. Pupils of different ethnic backgrounds mix harmoniously. Several pupils have trained as peer mentors to help resolve any cases of bullying. Pupils are confident in the school's procedures and feel safe because of the good level of supervision provided by staff. There has been an improvement in standards of behaviour around the school, particularly in the corridors and on the stairs, with only occasional instances when there is too much jostling.
16. Pupils have a good sense of ownership in their school. The prefects make a very good contribution to the smooth running of the school. There are several committees set up for pupils

to discuss issues of bullying, the playground and equal opportunities. Representatives of each year group meet in the school council, which has an increasingly effective influence on school decision making. Many pupils talk enthusiastically about the recent improvements to their school and wear their new uniform with pride. They are very keen to take part in the wide range of after school clubs. An impressive number come to school on Saturdays for computing, sport and other enrichment activities.

17. Parents are generally pleased with the gains in personal maturity their children make at the school.

#### **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

18. The overall quality of teaching and the learning it promotes is good overall. It is satisfactory in Years 7-9 and good in Years 10 and 11. Teaching has improved since the previous inspection when more than 10 per cent of teaching was unsatisfactory or poor. Almost three-quarters of the staff are new to the school since that inspection. In this inspection teaching was less than satisfactory in six per cent of lessons, which included only one lesson taught to a poor standard. Teaching is satisfactory or better in about nineteen out of twenty lessons, good or better in more than half and very good in more than one in ten. These figures match the targets of the school's action plan for the quality of teaching in Years 10 and 11 and are very close to the overall targets. Some good teaching was seen in all departments.
19. In Years 7-9, teaching is good in English, art and design, design and technology, music, physical education and religious education. It is satisfactory in all other subjects except modern foreign languages, in which it is unsatisfactory. Teaching in Years 10 and 11 is good in all subjects except mathematics, science, ICT and modern foreign languages, in which it is satisfactory. The quality of learning matches the quality of teaching in all subjects.
20. One of the major improvements since the previous inspection in the way that teachers approach their work is that most have higher expectations of their pupils, and have a clear picture of what they are able to achieve. They also pay attention to raising pupils' awareness of their own capabilities, which is appreciated by parents. The great majority of those who responded to the questionnaire now rightly believe that teaching is good overall and that their children are generally expected to work hard so that they make good progress. Pupils respond well to challenge. Learning was very good in a Year 7 English lesson because the teacher, while being very encouraging, set high standards at the outset and provided activities that stretched pupils of all levels of attainment. In an excellent Year 9 lesson for pupils with special educational needs, the teacher used challenging questions to reinforce learning very well. Occasionally, particularly in mathematics, science and modern foreign languages in Years 7-9, the level of challenge is misjudged and learning suffers. In a Year 9 French lesson, because the objectives of the lesson were not clear and the work presented little challenge, pupils made unsatisfactory progress. Progress was also unsatisfactory in another Year 9 French lesson because the tasks were pitched at too high a level and pupils found them too difficult to succeed.
21. Teachers use their good command of their subjects to ensure that the great majority of lessons are well planned to broaden pupils' horizons. Pupils are told clearly what they are expected to learn in the lesson. A variety of activities is planned to maintain interest and pace. Most lesson plans include time at the end of lessons to check what pupils have learned and to reinforce their learning. A strong feature is the contribution to pupils' progress made by learning support assistants which is made possible because they are usually included in planning so that they can successfully provide well directed support. Teachers in the special educational needs team give good advice on the different, and often complex, needs of pupils to help colleagues plan appropriate lessons. Occasionally, although lessons are planned with clear objectives, the methods used by teachers do not motivate pupils sufficiently to make progress. For example, in a Year 7 mathematics lesson, the activities provided did not hold pupils' attention, the pace of the lesson was very slow and pupils' consequent unsatisfactory behaviour presented difficulties of control. As a result, progress was poor. Although teachers know their subjects, the lack of experience of some shows in the difficulties they have in managing learning. Basic mistakes,

such as not ensuring that pupils pay attention when important information is being given are being dealt with by subject leaders and through the monitoring of teaching by senior staff. Nevertheless, in a small proportion of lessons, pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable. Teachers' planning of lessons is made more difficult by the sporadic attendance of some pupils because they cannot predict the composition of their classes, or how much time will need to be spent on helping pupils catch up with work they have missed.

22. The shared commitment of teachers to raising standards is evident in the way that they plan work together. During the inspection, many instances were seen of teachers, who were not specifically assigned to a class, giving their time to support colleagues. Such additional support promotes progress and contributes to maintaining a purposeful working atmosphere in lessons. Classroom management is generally better than at the time of the previous inspection. This is the result of a number of improvements. Teachers now adopt a more consistent approach to behaviour management, support is better used and the atmosphere in the school generally is more conducive to learning.
23. The marking of work is satisfactory overall, but there are inconsistencies both between and within departments. It is of a good standard in some departments, such as English. Here pupils redraft and improve their work in the light of teachers' comments that tell them clearly what they must do to improve. In mathematics and design and technology, marking is inconsistent and some teachers do not provide enough comments about what pupils need to do to improve their work. In science, teachers mark pupils' work regularly and consistently according to the school's marking policy. However, none of the grades are recorded. Consequently, a vital source of information is lost and teachers have to rely on memory when setting targets. In art and design, marking is constructive but does not give pupils a clear enough picture of their overall standards. The use of assessment information to monitor progress is not well established in most departments. Few are using the data they have to monitor pupils' progress well enough as they move through the school or to support lesson planning.
24. Specialist teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good overall, contributing to their good learning and progress. The common strengths observed in supported curriculum and reading group lessons are good relationships, combined with the perseverance of teachers and assistants in driving their pupils forward. Lessons are well planned and implemented and no time is wasted. Teachers promote the 'can do' culture of the school very effectively. As a result, pupils pay attention, work productively and do not give up - because they are not allowed to. A further strength is teachers' practice of getting their pupils to summarise what they have learned at the end of the lesson, ensuring there is time to do this properly. This reinforces pupils' learning and contributes effectively to their motivation, their social skills and to their self-confidence. Reading is well taught with attractive books and good quality worksheets, which contribute to pupils' understanding and effectively promote their writing skills. Some excellent teaching of phonic skills was observed, following a step-by-step approach using examples familiar to pupils' experiences and providing a mix of different ways of learning. While assessment is good in lessons, and teachers comment on good work or effort in exercise books, some teachers do not say what to do to make work better and too often require pupils only to look at their mistakes, not to correct them. The same mistakes are, therefore, repeated.
25. Teaching of pupils with special educational needs in subjects across the school is also good overall, contributing to their good progress. Their planning of work and methods to suit pupils' diverse needs is beginning to impact on raising standards. For example, teachers focus effectively on subject vocabulary, helped by good displays of key words across the school. This helps all pupils, but especially those learning English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties. There is some use of outlines for written work to help pupils organise their information on paper. Teachers make good use of support staff, including learning support assistants who attend curriculum meetings, and who are now being involved more in pupils' learning and in helping to monitor their progress. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. This good use of informed support contributes significantly to the good achievement of pupils with special educational needs. On the other hand, teachers are not using ICT enough, both within the special needs department and across subjects, to promote improvement in basic

skills and to provide opportunities for pupils with specific learning difficulties to word-process their work. Pupils with the most complex needs are given blocks of time on special computer programs, such as 'Successmaker' to promote literacy and numeracy, but not regularly enough. Other pupils however, including those with less significant special educational needs, do not have access to this facility.

26. Subject teachers attend well to the needs of pupils for whom English is an additional language. The school circulates helpful information about pupils' first language, their ethnicity and language levels and this helps with teachers' planning. Special educational needs support staff work flexibly in lessons, supporting early language learners as required. Some additional support is provided in lessons by a teacher supported by funding for ethnic minorities (EMAG), and this was seen to be effective in promoting Year 8 pupils' understanding and reading fluency. However, there is less of such support currently because the co-ordinator for English as an additional language, who left the school recently, has not yet been replaced. Consequently, the induction programme for pupils at an early stage of learning English has been interrupted and little more than half of the complement of targeted pupils actually attends this at present. Those that do attend make satisfactory progress. The school's use of five levels of language acquisition instead of the four used within Lambeth is unhelpful for teachers. The school is wisely considering changing to using National Curriculum threshold levels in English, which would give subject teachers a clearer picture of pupils' levels of skills in the different aspects of language learning.
27. Although appropriate attention is beginning to be given to developing pupils' literacy skills in departments across the school, this is not the case in respect of numeracy. Opportunities are missed in many lessons to develop pupils' confidence and accuracy in using number. The school has plans to improve the teaching of numeracy across the school. There is a considerable variation between departments in the use made of ICT to support learning in subjects and to help develop pupils' general skills. Although there are examples of good practice, the overall picture is unsatisfactory partly because of a lack of appropriate equipment and partly because of a need for teachers to be trained in the use of ICT to support learning in their subjects. Again, this is part of the school's planning for improvement.
28. There has been a considerable improvement in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection that is reflected in better learning and progress.

#### **HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?**

29. The curriculum is not broad and balanced in Years 7-9. This is for a variety of reasons. Not enough time is spent on music to cover the curriculum and provide a sound basis for study in Years 10 and 11. Likewise, history, geography and religious education teaching is restricted by the time allocated to the teaching of humanities. The continuity of pupils' learning is affected by the way that the time is arranged in blocks so that for periods of the year pupils do not receive teaching in one or other of the subjects. As a result, no pupils currently study geography in Years 10 and 11. The development of a "primary" style curriculum to meet the needs of younger pupils with special educational needs is a positive feature that is meeting with success, but its impact on all curriculum areas needs careful monitoring. In Years 10 and 11, the curriculum is reasonably broad and balanced. A number of initiatives add breadth to the curriculum, such as the project for disaffected pupils in partnership with Lambeth College, a range of GNVQ courses and other projects with local colleges for vocational training. There is a shortfall in the time allocated to the teaching of science, which leads to a narrowing of the curriculum particularly for higher attaining pupils. The teaching week of 23 hours and 45 minutes is below the time recommended for secondary schools.
30. The curriculum does not meet statutory requirements. This is because pupils do not receive their entitlement to ICT. Insufficient time is allocated for the teaching of religious education, particularly in Year 10, where the carousel arrangement leaves insufficient time to cover the requirements of the local Agreed Syllabus, and in Year 11, where there is no teaching at all.



About half the pupils in Years 10 and 11 do not study a modern foreign language, despite the statutory requirement; neither are they all officially disapplied from the National Curriculum. In Years 7-9 it is not possible to cover the statutory curriculum in physical education because of the inadequate facilities.

31. The provision made by the school for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall; some of it is good or better. There is very generous provision of support staff, including, twenty-three learning support assistants. Their contribution is a key factor in the overall good progress that pupils make. The school organises its curriculum by grouping pupils in Years 7 and 8 with the most significant learning or language needs in ways that enable them to receive more of the kind of teaching they need - for example, the teaching of phonics. This curricular arrangement is beneficial for these pupils, who make good progress. They integrate fully with their peers in mixed ability tutor groups and for most subjects. Other grouping arrangements have in-built flexibility so that pupils can move between groups in several subjects, according to their attainment and capability. There is a good range of accredited options for pupils taking fewer GCSE examinations, some part-time at Lambeth College, others elsewhere within the community. These pupils also share in the wide-ranging support provided by mentors from within the school and from local businesses. Additional useful and effective lessons help targeted pupils with study organisation and life skills. The requirements specified for pupils with a formal Statement of Special Educational Needs are fully met; and the school receives generous provision of support services from the Local Education Authority and from health authorities. Pupils' individual educational plans are of good quality, showing clear and achievable targets, practicable strategies, and useful information, circulated to staff in an easily accessible format. There is, in addition, good provision in school for pupils in danger of being excluded for unacceptable behaviour, and the school funds an external work-related course for disaffected older pupils. All this adds up to wide-ranging and plentiful provision for pupils with special educational needs. However, there are weaknesses in efficiency, which reduce its impact. The large numbers of computers in classrooms within the special educational needs department are hardly used. There is no planned provision to promote word-processing skills or use computer programmes as an adjunct to specialist teaching for pupils with specific learning difficulties; in fact, there is no specialist provision at all for these pupils. There are problems with take-up and attendance in some withdrawal groups for reading which have not been dealt with, resulting in allocated time not being used. Senior staff within the special educational needs department do very little scheduled teaching, either with small groups or team-teaching within other departments, which does not make best use of their skills. The department is collating statistical information, but does not yet analyse it to evaluate the effectiveness of different components of overall provision. Provision, which was unsatisfactory, is now satisfactory but not as good as it could be, given the resources available to the school.
32. The provision the school makes for pupils learning English as an additional language is satisfactory. Good support is provided in departments across the school, despite the fact that the school currently has no specialist co-ordinator, and this is the main source of support for pupils who are bilingual or almost bilingual. Teachers across the school have ready access to information identifying pupils who are learning English as an additional language, their stage of English language acquisition, their first language and their ethnicity. They have, therefore, what they need to plan groupings and lessons to maximise support for all pupils. In addition, within a framework of overall good teaching and learning, teachers focus well on key words, provide plentiful opportunities for pupils to ask and answer questions, and use support staff flexibly. Specialist support is available for bilingual pupils, but is currently restricted. One of the two specialist teachers supports pupils at early stages of learning English in different subjects. This support is effective; it is well informed and well planned with class teachers. The other specialist teacher has been re-deployed very recently to teach groups of pupils at early stages of learning English who are withdrawn from different subject lessons.
33. The provision for developing literacy skills is better than at the time of the previous inspection and just sufficiently effective to be satisfactory. However, although good progress has been made, the application of policy by teachers is inconsistent. There is good practice in some departments such as English, design and technology and physical education.

34. Provision for developing pupils' numeracy skills across the curriculum is unsatisfactory. The school does not have a whole-school policy for numeracy, with the result that few departments plan opportunities to develop numeracy skills through the teaching of their subjects.
35. The school makes available a very wide range of extra-curricular activities that enrich curricular provision. About 40 per cent of pupils take part in extra-curricular sport, supervised by a total of eight staff. Many departments offer clubs, activities and educational visits. Revision classes for GCSE examinations are held in science, mathematics and English. Classes are provided at weekends and there is an after-school homework club for pupils in Years 7-9 as well as 'catch-up' sessions at lunchtime.
36. The provision for personal and social education (PSHE) is good. The programme is taught in one period per week in Years 7 to 9. In addition, all year groups have a daily short tutorial period and a longer one on Wednesdays. A team of predominately senior staff teaches the PSHE programme. A suitable range of topics, including sex education, drugs awareness and some elements of citizenship are included. It was not possible to see many of these lessons during the week of inspection, but pupils say that they find the course helpful. In some lessons, the material could usefully be extended to fully occupy the hour allocated and facilitate more in depth research for pupils to develop ideas. Monitoring and evaluation of the programme is not yet fully in place. Form time and tutorials are very well used and contribute usefully to the overall provision.
37. Careers education is good. It is taught in one period per week in one term in each of Years 10 and 11 and focuses on college choices, interview techniques and writing curriculum vitae. The South Bank Careers Service supports the programme effectively and provides individual careers interviews for Year 11, as well as helping at the Year 9 options evenings and the target setting days. In addition, Year 11 pupils have been invited to sessions at the Brixton office, where specific career sessions are hosted. Pupils can consult the school careers adviser and research material in the careers library and on the computers. Last year the school held a careers fair at the school. Representatives from the local colleges and sixth form providers attended and helped pupils to make informed choices at the end of Year 11.
38. The school has good links with local primary schools through an effective liaison programme. There are good links with local colleges and other local organisations, which benefit pupils. Some pupils in Year 11 attend college for electronic engineering, 20 pupils in Year 11 take part in the 'disaffected' project at Lambeth College, and several other pupils benefit from links with local media and photography studios. The 'Connecting Stockwell' community forum, established with grant funding, has helped with the development of computing in the school and provided some laptop computers for pupils and email and Internet access. The funding for after-school and Saturday enrichment activities are provided by the Education Action Zone. These projects have expanded pupils' horizons. Pupils enjoy taking part in local sporting competitions, recently competing successfully in the local Pentathlon.
39. The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. A great effort has been made since the previous inspection for staff in departments to identify opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. These are now incorporated into schemes of work. Much work has been done to develop worship in whole-school and house assemblies and in tutor groups. There are good examples of spirituality being awakened in pupils in assemblies and in tutor groups. The whole-school assembly in the inspection week was outstanding. A sense of common purpose was achieved and a worshipful atmosphere created during prayers and the singing of a gospel spiritual song by a member of staff and singing by a choir of pupils. This awareness of spirituality is reflected well in house assemblies and in some tutor groups and in PSHE lessons. Opportunity is sometimes given to pupils to be very quiet for a few moments and to prepare for the day ahead or to reflect on the day as it finishes. Provision for the spiritual development of pupils is now good. In many subjects such as religious education, English, design and technology and history, pupils consider their own values and beliefs through the school curriculum. It is emphasised that the

Christian religion and other great faiths promote respect for others. Consideration is given to festivals of other religions. In Ramadan, pupils and staff had a prayer room. During the inspection, an attractive, tasteful display in the library celebrated the Chinese New Year of the horse.

40. Provision for moral education is good. The difference between right and wrong is reinforced continuously in all areas of school life including social activities. There is a high expectation of good behaviour in lessons and around the school. The code of conduct helps pupils to feel secure. In one house assembly, the moral message of the importance of caring and actively looking out for each other came across strongly. In an excellent lesson for six disaffected boys, great influence was subtly exerted for them to develop self-control. Respect for other people's ideas is insisted on in lessons such as religious education, art and design and PSHE. In history, pupils learn what can happen when a group takes over total control as Hitler and the Nazis did. Physical education lessons teach fair play based on rules and positive sporting behaviour is inculcated. Pupils respond well to sustainability issues of the environment. Their distress about the tragedy in Goma led them to raise funds to try to help. Teachers are good role models in their care for individuals and in their hard work.
41. Provision for pupils' social development is very good. The school is aware of its vital social role. It is an extremely caring community and strives to provide a place of both stability and social opportunity for its pupils. Teachers are friendly and generous in giving their time. They run many activities out of school time on weekdays and on Saturday mornings through the Pathways project. Extra sport and games such as cricket on Saturdays and the Pentathlon training are much appreciated by pupils. Very many subject lessons give good opportunities for collaborative work. Discussion plays a real part in some subject lessons such as in design and technology, art and design, PSHE, religious education and history. There are many social opportunities in links with the community and institutions outside school such as the Stockwell Festival, with performance artists who helped pupils to make a film last year, with the Royal Festival Hall, with the South Bank University, and with the Roundhouse project, to name a few. Prefects have a high sense of responsibility and give invaluable help in day to day school life. The pupils who help with visitors, such as the children from junior schools and their parents, do so willingly and are very good organisers. Pupils are involved on the school council and on pupil committees, such as the playground and environment committee.
42. Provision for pupils' cultural development continues to be very good. While the history and richness of different cultures are celebrated, it is emphasised that all ethnic groups at the school are part of the majority culture of the UK. Subjects in the taught curriculum make a significant contribution to pupils' cultural awareness. For example, major world religions are studied in religious education and the relationship between religion and culture is explored; there are multi-cultural themes and projects in music and in art and design; fiction from other cultures is read in English literature; drama uses multi-cultural visual aids and music. The mathematical multi-cultural displays show examples from China, Russia and Egypt, as well as Islamic patterns, Bengali numbers and much more. There is cultural richness in display and in practice in design and technology where good use is made of pupils' different backgrounds. Pupils played a significant part in the Channel 4 Shakespeare Festival. Pupils meet with media professionals and artists are welcomed to the school. A big event in the school calendar is the Christmas concert, when there are performances by the choir, by dance and drama pupils, by the school rock group and by the staff.
43. Since the previous inspection there have been improvements to the curriculum but many issues remain to be tackled. There are plans for a complete overhaul of the curriculum and further widening of choice for September 2002.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

44. There are good procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare. The newly established house system is working well. The heads of house and the form tutors have a good oversight of pupils' personal development and an increasingly effective oversight of their academic development through the

regular target setting days. Pupils meet with their form tutors for twenty minutes in the morning and ten minutes at the end of the day. These sessions are very productively used and are a key strength of the good level of care. They create a calm, purposeful start to the day.

45. Satisfactory child protection procedures, which comply with legislation, are in place. However, they would be further strengthened by training for all staff on child protection and briefing materials for new staff that name the co-ordinator. The school gives good attention to health and safety. Appropriate risk management checks are in place.
46. The procedures to promote and encourage good behaviour are improved and are now effective. The new behaviour policy is consistently implemented and is raising standards of behaviour.
47. Teachers handle the substantial minority of challenging pupils in the school well. The overall level of exclusions is high and does give cause for some concern. Whilst this has undoubtedly contributed to the improved standards of behaviour, it should be targeted to decrease. Although exclusions are carefully considered, and appropriate to raise standards, they have resulted in a significant loss of schooling time. For example 10 of the fixed period exclusions were for periods over the usually recommended maximum period of 15 days.
48. Letters of praise are sent home when pupils perform well; this is popular with parents and pupils alike. Pupils were involved in choosing the school motto of 'attitude determines altitude'. There are prominent displays celebrating success, such as pupils of the month; this is effective in encouraging higher achievement.
49. Attendance procedures are now broadly satisfactory and have improved since the previous inspection. The registers are now computerised and meet legal requirements. There are suitable incentives for good attendance including certificates, a lottery and prizes. The educational social officer gives good support and makes home visits. The school has just started to contact parents by telephone on the first day their child is absent; this is helping to enlist parents' support. However, these incentives and checks have not been in place long enough to raise attendance to acceptable levels and continued effort is needed.
50. There is potential to improve the monitoring of attendance. The school was unable to provide a breakdown of last year's attendance by year groups, thus opportunities to identify trends and concentrate effort to best effect are missed. Attendance is not monitored by ethnicity or gender. Registers are taken in lessons, but on a few occasions teachers are not always sure of who should be present, for example whether missing pupils are at college or on a visit. Checks are not made with the main registers until the end of the day. However the 'corridor sweeps' by staff are generally effective in ensuring that pupils attend all their lessons.
51. Anti-bullying procedures are good. Several pupils are trained as peer mentors and pupils have their own committee to discuss and solve any bullying concerns. Pupils are confident in the procedures. Although cases are appropriately documented in individual records, the school does not keep a central record of bullying incidents, so as to facilitate analysis and monitoring. A central log to record any racial harassment is also required.
52. The school has increased the range of opportunities for pupils to take responsibility. This has significantly increased pupils' sense of ownership in the school and improved their attitudes.
53. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are satisfactory. The collection and analysis of available data when pupils enter the school is good. The school collects information about pupils' prior attainment from primary schools and from a range of tests. Key Stage 2 National Curriculum test results, reading, writing and numeracy tests and nationally standardised tests are combined to build up a clear picture of pupils' attainment when they arrive at the school. This information is made available to teachers so that they have a clear picture of the attainment of the pupils they are teaching. In departments, there is some developing good practice, for example in design and technology. However, not all departments have appropriate procedures in place for assessing pupils' attainment as they move through the school. For example, in modern

foreign languages, art and design and science no records of pupils' attainment are kept. As a result some of the teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 do not relate accurately to the National Curriculum.

54. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' progress are unsatisfactory. The school has an effective system for reviewing progress by setting targets for individual pupils. However, although subjects are required to provide targets for pupils regularly, the processes used to arrive at those targets within individual departments are not clear. The use of assessment information to monitor progress is not well established in most departments. Few are using the data they have to monitor pupils' progress well enough as they move through the school. The school's marking policy is causing some confusion in pupils' understanding of how well they are doing. The use of assessment information to guide the planning of the curriculum is unsatisfactory. Assessment information is still not used well enough in many departments to plan for pupils' individual needs, to inform lesson planning or to review the curriculum. This has not improved enough since the previous inspection. Considerable variations still exist between subjects. The use of data to raise attainment of individuals and groups of pupils is still not sufficiently developed.
55. The assessment of pupils' special educational needs is satisfactory overall. In general, the procedures for assessment are better than the use made of assessment information. Pupils transferring from primary schools are visited and there are clear systems for ensuring that information about special educational needs is available for staff. All pupils are given tests and the results are included in a spreadsheet with necessary information about special educational needs. This is circulated to departments to help lesson and group planning. There are clear procedures for assessing the needs of the many pupils who arrive at different times during the school year, and for teachers to record concerns about pupils' progress. Screening includes health checks to identify, for example, hearing difficulties. Individual education plans for pupils who receive additional provision, including for those who have a formal statement, are of good quality, with clear and achievable targets, although group plans have targets that are too general. There are sensible arrangements to ensure effective day-to-day communication and a wide range of formal and informal monitoring of pupils' needs, behaviour and progress. Pupils' records are maintained in good order. Information from assessment is used to inform additional support in lessons, in withdrawal reading groups and to encourage attendance in voluntary reading clubs. However, the school is not yet using its information fully enough. For example, the results of reading tests for all pupils are not analysed to gauge the progress of pupils whose standards in reading is good enough to enable them to cope with most lessons but is still well below what it should be.
56. Assessment procedures for pupils for whom English is an additional language are unsatisfactory. Pupils' overall acquisition of English is assessed and recorded and all staff receive this information; information about pupils' first language and ethnicity is also provided. All this helps teachers to plan their lessons effectively, choose appropriate materials and use support staff to identify need and monitor progress. As a result pupils make good progress overall across subjects. However, the school uses five stages of language levels in its records, while at the same time using the Local Educational Authority's analysis of pupils' achievement in terms of four language stages. This is confusing. Moreover, while specialist teachers maintain their records of support and language levels, the school does not maintain individual detailed records for pupils for whom English is an additional language to monitor their progress in speaking, listening, reading and writing English. Such records provide the foundation for planning to meet the needs of individual developing bilingual pupils. This weakness is recognised and steps are now being taken to deal with it.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

57. Relatively few parents completed the pre-inspection questionnaire or attended the pre-inspection meeting. Those who did respond had mixed views but were mostly satisfied with the school. There are strong indications that parents are increasingly pleased with the school and have noticed improvements. Parents find the school approachable. They believe that the school is

well led and that their children are making progress as result of good teaching. The inspectors agree with these positive views.

58. Parents did not raise many specific concerns. They did find some inconsistencies in the homework set, but the inspectors found that homework was being set regularly. Some parents had concerns about standards of behaviour. The inspectors found that behaviour was satisfactory, but did see a few lessons where this was not the case. These lessons were mainly in Years 7 and 8 and often closely linked to the quality of teaching. There are also some challenging pupils at the school. Some have complex needs and difficulties that lead to occasional flare-ups of unacceptable behaviour, which is one of the reasons for the high number of exclusions. The school deals swiftly and firmly with any such incidents.
59. Parents are now involved in a greater range of events at the school and there is an improved and more effective partnership. Target setting days are held with the heads of house, form tutors, parents and pupils. These are well attended and contribute to forming a close educational partnership. The headteacher holds an open 'surgery' on two evenings each week. This good practice helps to iron out any potential problems. The declining number of parents finding the need to meet with the headteacher on these evenings is a good indication of the increasingly effective communication.
60. Parents are giving sound support both to the school and to their children's education. The recently formed parents and teachers association, although still small in numbers, is providing enthusiastic and positive support. One of their ideas was to hold educational evenings for parents and these have been started. Parents have supported the new uniform standards. Some parents are still not involved enough in supporting their children's work by ensuring their regular attendance and there is scope to develop further initiatives to involve them.
61. Written communications are unsatisfactory overall. This is mainly because the annual written progress reports on pupils' progress do not provide a coherent picture of progress and attainment in all subjects. At the time of the previous inspection, no reports on progress were issued. The school has dealt with the need to produce them; they now need more rigorous completion. Examination of a sample of reports revealed gaps. Some subjects had not indicated the child's attainment, some had not written any comments and some did not report attendance at school. There were internal inconsistencies between some attainment levels reported in the Year 9 reports and the summaries of levels obtained in national tests. The inspectors also think that the reports do not have enough information about what pupils can do in the subject and what they need to do to improve. Target setting days usefully supplement the written information on progress, so that, overall, parents do receive a reasonably clear picture of their children's progress.
62. Currently the school does not have a prospectus to issue to parents, although one is being prepared. The governors' annual report to parents does not contain information about public examination results, with national standards, as required.
63. In other respects communications have improved. The newsletters are friendly and interesting. They provide good information about events and successes at the school, as does the well-presented school magazine.
64. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are properly informed of provision made for their children although the school does not yet involve them as fully as it could as partners in their child's learning. There is no prospectus to inform parents of the school's policy for Special Educational Needs, although that policy exists in full and summary form and is clear and practicable. There is a full account of provision in the Governors' annual report to parents, but not enough information is given on how effective the provision is. The school does have effective systems of informing parents of their child's needs and the provision made by the school, but there is no school leaflet that explains the Code of Practice. Parents of pupils in the support unit are involved closely as partners in supporting their children's behaviour, but there is no system

to encourage parents of other pupils with special educational needs to become involved. For example, there is no programme of home reading support for younger pupils.

65. The school has no written policy for English as an additional language nor a prospectus to inform parents of provision made. However, there is a wealth of languages available within the school that is used to help translate communication with parents; for example, by providing assessments in pupils' first languages. Interpreters are also used from local services if required.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

66. The school is very well led and managed by the headteacher and senior staff. The very good leadership provided by the headteacher has led to considerable improvements in the school since the previous inspection. The headteacher has provided clear educational direction that has secured a strong commitment to improvement among all staff. The school was identified as having serious weaknesses at the time of the previous inspection. It has now turned the corner and is improving. Although there is a great deal still to be done, the headteacher has been successful in creating a purposeful atmosphere in the school that promotes inclusion by focusing on pupils' individual needs. Teaching has improved, standards are improving and pupils' behaviour is much better. The school is racially harmonious. Teachers now expect more of pupils and pupils are learning to raise their horizons and to realise their own potential. The principle focus of the senior management team is on raising standards. Regular reviews and the setting of targets ensure that all staff are now accountable for how well their pupils do. The headteacher and senior staff have a highly visible presence around the school and this does much to keep the atmosphere in the school calm and pleasant. The unity of purpose among the staff was evident during the inspection in the way that all took responsibility and quickly stepped in to deal calmly and quietly with the smallest incidences of unsatisfactory behaviour outside lessons and make sure that they did not get worse. In some departments, teachers also gave up their non-assigned time to support each other in classrooms and to help pupils make progress.
67. The headteacher has a clear vision as to how the school should develop. The strengths and weaknesses of the school are well understood and a realistic approach to managing the necessary wholesale improvement has been adopted. In the short time since her appointment she has worked to a clear set of priorities, which recognised the prime importance of changing the outlook of staff and pupils. Improving the appearance of the school buildings and enlisting the support of parents so that all pupils now wear uniform have led to pupils taking pride in their school and themselves. The introduction of systematic monitoring of and support for teaching, on both a whole-school and a departmental basis, has led to an improvement in teaching and more consistent approaches to classroom practice. Where improvement cannot be secured, the headteacher does not shrink from taking disciplinary action, which has been partly responsible for the high level of staff turnover since her appointment. Her initial plans concentrated on improving performance in Years 10 and 11, because less school time was left to bring about improvement with those pupils, led to a jump in GCSE performance in 2001 and more improvement than in Years 7-9. Other matters, which are important, but in the context of the school less pressing, such as the curriculum structure and the use of assessment, are part of future development planning. The school's action plan is detailed and covers an impressive range of objectives - all aimed at improving standards - with good, clear linkage between them.
68. Regular reviews of departments take place each term and are an important feature of the monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance. Reviews have a specific focus, such as progress towards targets identified in department development plans, and result in agreed targets for improvement – for the department and individual teachers.
69. The management structure now includes a leadership group consisting of the senior management team, directors of learning and pastoral managers. This group brings a good combination of strengths to the management of change, necessary for improvement from the very low point that the school was at when the headteacher was appointed. For the most part, the quality of middle management is good. The pastoral system and many subjects are

managed well. There is a clear link between the quality of management in a department and standards. For example, good management in English and design and technology is leading to higher expectations and improving standards. However, management of humanities and ICT are unsatisfactory because currently there is nobody in direct charge of these areas. Management of modern foreign languages is unsatisfactory and as a result the department has not improved sufficiently since the previous inspection.

70. Financial planning is good. The school receives an above average budget because of the relatively high level of additional funding allocated for pupils with special educational needs and other grants, such as for pupils with English as an additional language. Spending is targeted well to support the school's priorities and is helping to raise standards, for example through the provision of additional classroom support. The administration and finance manager keeps a firm hold upon finance and ensures that spending decisions are justified. The school benefits from voluntary professional support in managing its finances and has sound financial plans to support strategic development. Although the budget is currently in deficit, largely as a result of the school's management difficulties over recent years, the school is working towards a balanced budget through plans agreed with the Local Education Authority. The principles of best value are applied well; the school compares itself with other schools in the borough and evaluates spending against its performance. The day-to day running of the school is administered efficiently, making good use of new technology. Although there is some inefficiency in the deployment of special educational needs provision, the school makes satisfactory use of its resources overall and provides satisfactory value for money.
71. A weakness in the school's management is that the governing body fails to meet some of its statutory obligations. Pupils do not receive their entitlement to be taught the full national curriculum in ICT, modern foreign languages, religious education and physical education. Apart from the difficulties in physical education, which are largely beyond the school's control, the other matters are included in the school's plans to restructure the curriculum. The frequency of acts of collective worship do not meet requirements and the school does not have a prospectus containing all the information required for parents. Nevertheless, governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They discuss aspects such as examination performance and finance knowledgeably. They play a full part in shaping the direction of the school's development, monitor performance and set appropriate targets for improvement. Overall, the governing body provides good support for the school and, except for the matters noted, discharges its responsibilities satisfactorily.
72. Management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. There are two directors of pupil support whose main strength is their commitment to constantly improving the support for pupils with special educational needs across the school. The school has made reasonable progress in adapting to the revised Code of Practice. Monitoring is continuous and its impact on teaching within the department is evident in consistent good practice. There are some weaknesses in deployment, showing insufficient rigour in the evaluation and use of resources – for example, the teaching skills of the directors of support are underused. The school has made satisfactory interim arrangements for the leadership and management of its provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language, pending the appointment of a replacement co-ordinator.
73. The determination to raise standards of teaching and learning is evident in the breadth of arrangements for teachers' professional development. The process is well managed, carefully monitored and evaluated. Staff development is linked to the action plan following the previous inspection. Much training, using external support chief examiners and consultants takes place in 'twilight' sessions and at weekends, demonstrating teachers' commitment to professional development. Some staff are following an M.A. course at the University of North London. Holders of posts of responsibility, and other colleagues who have management aspirations, are provided with a separate management development programme. Performance management has been introduced to good effect. All teachers and departments have appropriate targets and their performance is monitored systematically. There is a clear drive to raise standards by developing consistent approaches to teaching and increasing accountability.



74. There is a good induction programme for new staff, including newly qualified teachers and teachers qualified abroad, and good mentoring arrangements are in place. The school uses the Local Education Authority's support programme for newly qualified teachers and follows the authority's procedures. Newly qualified teachers confirm that they are well supported by senior managers and within their departments. The school uses established links with graduate teacher programmes at the University of North London and University of Greenwich to support teachers qualified overseas. These staff also benefit from an extensive programme of information in twilight courses on a wide variety of school issues.
75. The match of teaching and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is unsatisfactory overall. Problems of recruitment and retention of specialist teachers still persist and particularly affect the continuity of learning in mathematics, geography and religious education. Other departments such as, humanities music and ICT lack heads of department. The school has been energetic and imaginative in attempting to fill vacancies, for example recruiting teachers from abroad.
76. The quality of the school's accommodation is unsatisfactory. Many of the issues raised in the previous inspection report remain in spite of further building and self-help programmes. The school makes the best of a difficult situation by using off-site facilities and temporary buildings. Some subjects, for example science, are affected by leaking flat roofs and others such as music, drama and physical education by lack of space and facilities. The repairs to the swimming pool have prohibited swimming since the previous inspection with the result that National Curriculum requirements cannot be met. Stimulating displays help to make the corridors and classrooms attractive but continual maintenance is required for ageing electrical, heating and plumbing systems. In spite of the efforts of the school's management, the accommodation has a detrimental effect on learning.
77. Resources to support learning are now broadly satisfactory, and are good in English. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, especially in mathematics, science and physical education. The library now makes provision for a wide variety of pupils. The range of fiction books is both challenging and extensive, while audio-tapes and bilingual dictionaries support lower attaining pupils and those with English as an additional language.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- (1) Continue to seek ways to improve attendance.\* (See paragraphs 5, 8, 11, 21, 49, 50, 60, 80, 83, 127, 130, 137, 183, 195 and 197.)
- (2) Improve the quality of opportunities for learning so that:
- sufficient time is allocated for teaching geography, history, music and religious education and science;
  - statutory requirements are met in respect of religious education and modern foreign languages in Years 10 and 11; for physical education in Years 7-9 and for provision for teaching ICT \*across the school;
  - a whole-school policy for numeracy is implemented\*

(See paragraphs 7, 27, 29, 30, 34, 71, 95, 96, 105, 114, 154-157, 159, 168, 184, 185, 186, 188 and 191.)

- (3) Improve the use of assessment to promote learning and progress so that:
- there is consistently good practice across the school;
  - the results of assessment can be used effectively to set targets for, and monitor the performance of, departments and pupils and to support curricular planning.

(See paragraphs 23, 53, 54, 100, 111, 169 and 178.)

- (4) Improve the quality of information to parents so that:
- reports tell them clearly how well their children are doing and what they need to do to improve;
  - a school prospectus is produced that meets all statutory requirements.\*

(See paragraphs 61, 62, 64, 65, 71 and 178.)

The following should also be considered for inclusion in planning for improvement:

- Standards, teaching and management in modern foreign languages. (See paragraphs 4, 19, 69, 163, 166, 169 and 171.)
- Management of humanities, ICT and music. (See paragraphs 69 and 75.)
- The use of resources for pupils with special educational needs. (See paragraph 72.)
- The inadequacies in the school's accommodation. (See paragraph 76.)

\* These issues are already included in the school's planning.

## PUPIL SUPPORT CENTRE

78. Good provision, funded by additional grant, is made for pupils in danger of being excluded and for older pupils who have become disaffected with formal schooling. A Pupil Support Centre caters for pupils up to Year 9 and a full-time college-based course for older pupils. Both are effective for those pupils who attend regularly. The school-based provision is impressive. It consists of a bright and well-furnished room within the Special Educational Needs department, with a specialist teacher and support staff. The care and support of pupils, however, extends well beyond this to subject lessons and to pupils' families, who are involved as partners working together with the school. Pupils are identified through a process of continuous monitoring of progress in lessons across the school, and provision is geared to academic as well as social and behavioural needs. For example, Year 9 pupils currently working in the Support Centre were observed working on '*Macbeth*', in order to keep up with English work for the National Curriculum tests. Despite their considerable social and emotional difficulties, challenging and effective teaching ensured all pupils identified and discussed dramatic effects in the text and had individually learned and acted out a key extract from the play by the end of the lesson.
79. The purpose of the provision is to help pupils not just to recognise their own unacceptable behaviour, but to change it. The key factors in the centre's effectiveness are the very skilled teaching and support provided by the head of the centre and the learning support assistant. They provide excellent role models for the pupils, currently all boys, speaking quietly, with respect and courtesy, and demanding similar respect from the pupils. They are successful in a remarkably short time because their commitment, integrity, and skills are evident to all and their manner with pupils is consistent. Consequently pupils learn quickly to trust them. In one social skills lesson observed, Year 9 pupils' learning ostensibly evolved as if naturally but was, in fact, very carefully planned. The teacher used a variety of quick and reflective questions to focus pupils' attention; he used effective body language and occasional intervention to maintain good behaviour and the 'circle time' method of turn-taking to promote self-discipline and to give time for pupils to reflect and speak. The learning support assistant mirrored these skills. The result was impressive in terms of pupils' personal development. Boys with serious problems and a hard reputation spoke of their feelings, their problems, their hopes and ambitions. They were helped to recognise their power to achieve what they really want and several of the group practised newly-developed skills, copied from the adult staff, of avoiding and calming potential disruption from others in the group. All the boys expressed their wish to get back into mainstream lessons: this support is properly seen as a transition to full integration in subject lessons. Target lessons are selected for gradual re-integration with additional support from staff from the local Pupil Referral Unit and from learning mentors.
80. Older pupils who have become disaffected with school attend a mix of basic skills and vocational classes at Lambeth College. Courses include sound engineering, computer technology and electronics. Two of the school's learning support assistants provide support and the school receives reports on individual pupils' progress and attendance. Progress is satisfactory and often good for those who attend, but attendance varies unacceptably. For example, it ranged from 23 per cent to 88 percent for one computer technology class last term.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	133
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	64

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	14	59	50	7	1	0
Percentage	2	11	44	38	5	1	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	802
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	493

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	45
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	633

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	393

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	42
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	97

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.6
National comparative data	8.1

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	3.5
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 pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2001	87	71	158

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	7	17	17
	Girls	21	12	14
	Total	28	29	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	18 (10)	18 (2)	20 (13)
	National	64 (63)	66 (65)	66 (59)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	4 (2)	6 (7)	4 (1)
	National	31 (28)	43 (42)	34 (30)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	8	23	25
	Girls	14	17	24
	Total	22	40	49
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	16 (24)	26 (26)	35 (18)
	National	65 (64)	68 (66)	64 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	1 (3)	3 (8)	10 (4)
	National	31 (31)	42 (39)	33 (29)

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	2001	89	48	137

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	20	64	79
	Girls	16	35	46
	Total	36	99	125
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	29 (11)	75 (68)	93 (92)
	National	48 (47)	91 (91)	96 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score	School	25.1 (19.0)

Per pupil	National	39.0 (38.4)
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*Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.*

**Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	223
Black – African heritage	174
Black – other	25
Indian	8
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	32
Chinese	12
White	256
Any other minority ethnic group	72

**Exclusions in the last school year**

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	34	3
Black – African heritage	16	0
Black – other	3	1
Indian	1	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	3	0
Chinese	0	0
White	19	1
Other minority ethnic groups	5	0

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

**Teachers and classes****Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	52.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	13.4

**Education support staff: Y7 – Y11**

Total number of education support staff	22.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	720

**Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11**

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	70.3
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**Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11**

Key Stage 3	21.6
Key Stage 4	23.6

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Financial information**

Financial year	2000/01
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	£
Total income	3,672,077
Total expenditure	3,597,961
Expenditure per pupil	4,481
Balance brought forward from previous year	-113,672
Balance carried forward to next year	-39,556

**Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	63.3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	45.2

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	7.8
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	19.0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	7.8

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*



## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	802
Number of questionnaires returned	23

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	30	0	4	0
My child is making good progress in school.	65	26	4	4	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	43	9	4	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	26	26	17	0
The teaching is good.	61	30	0	4	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	65	26	9	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	87	13	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	65	30	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	78	13	4	4	0
The school is well led and managed.	65	30	4	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	57	39	4	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	52	35	4	4	4

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

**ENGLISH**

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

**Strengths**

- The department is well led and managed.
- Teaching is good overall.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good.

**Areas for improvement**

- Continued monitoring of teaching and sharing of good practice.

82. In 2001, pupils' performance in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 was very low compared with pupils' performance nationally, and well below average in comparison with pupils in similar schools. Their performance in English was similar to that in science and better than in mathematics. Girls did much better than boys. Pupils' average points score has stayed at about the same level over the last four years except in 1999 when it was higher. The trend of improvement has been below the national trend. Given that pupils' attainment on entry to the school has consistently been very low, the figures represent satisfactory achievement.

83. GCSE results for A\*-C grades in 2001 were well below average, and below average for A\*-G grades. English literature results for A\*-C grades were above average, and all pupils entered gained at least a pass grade. Entry for this examination was, however, restricted to higher attaining pupils. Girls did much better than boys, though the performance of both girls and boys was significantly below their respective national averages. Pupils' performance was also relatively worse than in their other subjects. Difficulties in handling language for clear expression in written work affected the performance of many pupils and poor attendance affected the performance of some. In relation to their standards at the end of Year 9, pupils achieved as well as might be expected.

84. In work seen during the inspection, standards are well below average at the end of Years 9 and 11. Achievement in Years 7 - 9 is now good; achievement is satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Standards at the end of Year 9 are better than previous test results as a result of improved teaching and pupils' better attitudes to learning. Many pupils enter the school with low reading ages, very low results in tests taken at the end of Year 6 and very low scores in tests of reasoning skills. Special educational needs support staff provide good support, both in teaching groups and alongside class teachers, so that these pupils make at least satisfactory and often good progress in lessons. They enjoy and benefit from computer software designed to improve spelling, punctuation, grammar and vocabulary. Teachers use the feedback provided by these programs to identify pupils' needs more closely. Pupils with English as an additional language are also well supported through the school, as in a Year 10 class where a teaching assistant helped two recently admitted Portuguese-speaking pupils with translation so that they were able to participate in the class discussion of a Simon Armitage poem. The longest that other pupils from different countries in this same class had been learning English was two years. Most, despite some problems with English pronunciation, were confident about speaking in front of others and all were making good progress in understanding their reading.

85. Lower attaining pupils have handwriting and presentation weaknesses, are uncertain about spelling and lack control of tenses. Their writing is often a reflection of pupils' patterns of speech. The relatively small proportion of higher attainers is able to speak confidently in front of others, often giving an extended response. They develop descriptive and analytical skills sufficiently to be able to write careful and thoughtful responses to texts. A very able pupil in Year 9 provided a succinct summary of a scene in *'Macbeth'* combined with perceptive analysis of Lady Macbeth's character. A Year 11 pupil wrote with fluency and sophistication in her

coursework assignments for personal and creative writing and text comparison. A group of Year 11 pupils following a media studies course were confident users of 'Microsoft Publisher' software to present a magazine project and their writing was appropriately matched to the 'teenage' content. Scrutiny of other Year 11 work by middle attaining pupils showed that standards continue to be affected by awkwardness of expression, arbitrary spelling and a limited range of vocabulary. Analytical skills, too, are limited. There is much carefully written and worthwhile coursework where teachers' advice and re-drafting has discovered and corrected problems, but pupils' writing under examination conditions exposes weaknesses more starkly. Nevertheless, examination targets set for 2002 aim for a sensible and attainable improvement over last year's results. They reflect the fact that achievement of the current Year 9 pupils is good, given their very low attainment on entry, and that pupils usually continue to achieve as well as might be expected in Years 10 and 11, given their performance at the end of Year 9 in 2000.

86. The contribution of other subjects to improving standards of literacy is better than at the time of the previous inspection and just sufficiently effective to be satisfactory but the application of policy by teachers is inconsistent. A teaching and learning group supports the literacy co-ordinator in developing literacy across the school. Though good progress has been made, not all teachers are effectively carrying out appropriate strategies. This deficiency is significant in a school where standards of literacy are well below average. There is good practice in some departments such as design and technology where pupils are given key words as part of a step by step approach to reading and understanding prior to making. Opportunities are also provided for speaking and listening. Occasionally, teachers promote literacy skills in mathematics lessons by giving attention to technical language and ensuring that pupils are able to read and understand words in textbooks. In physical education, pupils are taught key words (for example in a Year 8 volleyball lesson and in the GCSE course) and these are reinforced in homework. Pupils learn key words for religious education and other subject words as well. Spelling and punctuation errors are corrected in their exercise books. Lesson plans across the school contain literacy targets (for example 'Ensure writing in full sentences') but these are not always carried out in practice in the classroom. For example, in history the obvious weaknesses of the pupils in spelling, sentence structure and punctuation are not consistently attended to. As a result, most pupils' knowledge of history is much better than their ability to write about it effectively. The library has a good supply of books that caters well for pupils of all levels of attainment and, together with the special educational needs department, includes appropriate readers for pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. Pupils also benefit from being able to attend a reading club on Saturday mornings or after school.
87. Pupils have a good attitude to their work as a result of interesting, enthusiastic teaching. Their behaviour is also good, and well managed by teachers through attention to individual needs, good humour and a lively approach. Pupils respond particularly well when teachers make demands on them for accuracy in expression and a positive contribution to the lesson. In a Year 7 class, for example, pupils responded with enthusiasm to work on 'parts of speech' and to predicting the outcome of an extract from Ted Hughes' story '*The Iron Man*' because the teacher encouraged involvement from all while maintaining stringent control. She expected and received answers that showed attention to the detail of the text. Year 9 pupils' good attitudes were evident from their concentration on discussion work in groups about '*Macbeth*' and their interest and involvement in explaining the character and role of Lady Macbeth. The positive attitudes of a Year 10 class were evident in a pupil's question 'Can we do more?' when asked to write a twenty-line summary of a discussion on a Simon Armitage poem. Year 11 pupils' interest was fired by their teacher's lively explanation of a maid's less pleasant duties in '*Charlotte O'Neil's Song*' (including emptying chamber pots). In another Year 11 lesson, pupils showed obvious appreciation of their new understanding of the poem '*Nothing's Changed*' as a result of their teacher's attention to its symbolic qualities.
88. The quality of teaching is good overall, and pupils learn well as a result. Well-planned lessons provide appropriate learning activities within a secure framework. Clear learning objectives are set out in advance. Teachers make good use of key words as a focus for learning. Their

enthusiasm and interest generate positive attitudes to the subject. They receive good support from teaching assistants who contribute much to the learning of individuals and to the pleasant learning atmosphere in classrooms. Some very good teaching in the department is characterised by high expectations and active involvement of all pupils. In a Year 7 class, for example, the teacher adopted a very encouraging but also stringent approach to the pupils' difficulties. She generated excitement and enthusiasm by attending very closely to the spelling and meaning of words. She constantly checked understanding. She ensured that all pupils were questioned and gave an answer, but was also aware of pupils' targets and whether they were meeting them appropriately. As a result, very good learning took place not only about parts of speech but also about the implications of the text extract from Ted Hughes' story *The Iron Man*. The teacher's expectation that pupils in a Year 8 class would listen to and respect each other's views, and her emphasis on the importance of appropriate and accurate expression in speech, led to good reinforcement of the language of persuasion and very good attitudes to learning. In a very good question and answer session with a Year 11 class, the teacher brought out strongly the use of language in the poem '*Nothing's Changed*' and particularly its symbolic qualities – the discussion and searching nature of the questioning prompted new and appreciative understanding among pupils. Some lessons, though satisfactory, reveal areas for improvement. Teachers miss opportunities to involve all pupils in learning. On occasions, a few more confident pupils are relied upon to sustain discussion. Sometimes teachers over-explain or fail to move quickly enough into active learning. Teachers' use of overhead projector displays does not always enhance learning because of poor visibility or inadequately highlighted points. Homework is not always linked appropriately with a lesson's main features. Most of these situations arise from the relative newness and inexperience of some staff, who are, nevertheless, committed to their work and constantly striving to improve.

89. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection. Standards of attainment, although still well below average, are set to rise this year. Achievement in Years 7-9 - unsatisfactory at the previous inspection - is now good because teaching quality and pupils' attitudes have improved. The improvement arises from good leadership and management by the director of learning, who is herself a model of very good teaching. Despite a difficult period of uncertainty over staffing and the consequent disruption and loss of continuity in teaching, she has given stability, maintained standards and shifted the emphasis towards higher expectations of pupils and teachers alike. As a result, given reasonable staffing stability and continuing monitoring of the consistency of the quality of teaching, the capacity for further improvement is good.

## MATHEMATICS

90. Overall, the quality of provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### Strengths

- Day-to-day administration is good.
- Lesson planning.

### Areas for improvement

- Standards in Years 7-9.
- Whole school involvement in developing numeracy skills across the curriculum.
- The use of computers to support learning.
- Use of assessment to monitor subject performance and pupils' progress.

91. In the 2001 National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9, results were very low. No significant improvement has been made in results over the last four years. Results were very low when compared with all schools and with similar schools. Boys did slightly better than girls, although in previous years girls did better than boys. Results were not as good as those in both science and English. These results represent satisfactory achievement in relation to pupils' attainment when they entered the school in Year 7.

92. In 2001, the proportion of pupils gaining grades A\*-C in GCSE examinations was well below average. The proportion of pupils gaining grades A\*-G was above average. These results were well below average compared to all schools and above average compared to similar schools. Results made a significant improvement in 2000 and continued to improve in 2001. They represent satisfactory achievement in relation to pupils' attainment at the end of Year 9. The performance of girls and boys was similar. Pupils did not perform as well in mathematics as they did in many other subjects studied.
93. In the work seen during the inspection, standards are very low at the end of Year 9. This matches recent test results. Although standards are improving slightly, pupils' very low levels of numeracy on entry to the school and the difficulties the subject has with staffing make it difficult to improve standards at a fast enough rate. There are no significant differences between pupils from different backgrounds. Number skills are weak. Many pupils have difficulty with handling numbers mentally. For example, many pupils do not recall tables confidently in mental activities and some of the highest attaining pupils in Year 9 have difficulty with the concepts of rounding decimal numbers when estimating. Algebraic skills are weak for most pupils with only a small proportion of pupils handling algebraic expressions and equations with confidence. Pupils' understanding of shape and space and data handling are better although still not well developed for most pupils. The highest attaining pupils make accurate scale drawings using bearings but lower attaining pupils have difficulty with translating shapes. Problem-solving skills are being developed through investigational tasks, although many pupils have difficulty in finding patterns and using rules.
94. Standards in the work seen at the end of Year 11 are well below average. There are no significant differences between pupils from different backgrounds. Number and algebraic skills are still weak for many pupils. They find calculations without a calculator difficult, although the highest attaining pupils in Year 10 have learned strategies for squaring numbers mentally. Only the highest attaining pupils can use algebra with any confidence; they simplify algebraic expressions involving brackets confidently and draw accurate graphs of quadratic functions. Pupils' data-handling skills and understanding of shape and space are better but still not well developed for all but the highest attaining pupils. Problem-solving skills are barely satisfactory for many pupils although most can now identify patterns and rules. Higher attaining pupils can predict and test results and find appropriate formulae.
95. The contribution made by other subjects to developing pupils' numeracy skills is unsatisfactory. The school does not have a whole school policy for numeracy, with the result that few subjects plan effectively to develop numeracy skills. The low levels of numeracy found in mathematics lessons are reflected in most other subjects. For example, in science, no planned contribution to numeracy is made within the schemes of work or in policy statements with the result that pupils have difficulty with using simple formulae and drawing accurate graphs. In art, pupils lack confidence when measuring card to make boxes. In design and technology, pupils understand the need for accuracy when measuring materials although calculators are needed for simple calculations about calories in food. Effective use is not being made of 'Successmaker', the individual learning program for the computer, to improve pupils' numeracy skills in Year 7.
96. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. The problem the school has over recruiting and retaining suitably qualified and competent staff is having a major impact on the overall quality of teaching. At present, half of all lessons are taught by temporary teachers or those qualified abroad. This is having a negative effect on pupils' learning and the standards achieved. The planning for lessons is good. Teachers generally plan well to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Tasks are usually graded in difficulty to allow pupils to move forward at their own pace. Occasionally, however, the tasks do not provide sufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils. The technique of dividing the lesson into three parts, with a starter activity and time at the end to check what pupils have learned, is well used in all lessons and individual lesson plans have clear objectives. In most lessons, objectives for the lesson are clearly written and discussed so that pupils are aware of what they are going to learn. Good use is made of starter mental activities at the beginning of lessons to develop pupils' numeracy skills and good attention is given to literacy skills with key words displayed for

each lesson. Overhead projectors are used well to create a good pace to lessons and maintain interest. When support staff are available they are used efficiently to support pupils' learning. Teachers have a sound subject knowledge that ensures that they are able to explain concepts clearly to help pupils understand new topics and skills. Teaching methods often provide appropriate activities to help pupils learn. For example, in a Year 8 lesson, the pupils were placed in groups to discuss their understanding of translating shapes. At present, however, computers are not used well enough to support learning.

97. Where teaching is least effective, the weak management of pupils means that time is wasted maintaining order and, as a result, pupils do not concentrate as well as they should. Their interest is not maintained throughout the lesson. Planning does not take enough account of pupils' poor listening skills. Too long is spent on discussion and not enough time is allowed for pupils to work on individual tasks. As a result, the quantity of work found in pupils' books is much less than might be expected. The pace of some lessons is slow with activities that do not demand enough from pupils. Questioning of pupils is generally satisfactory, although teachers often need to ensure pupils do not shout out answers and disrupt others. In some lessons, questioning did not explore well enough what pupils already knew about the topic being covered. Homework is used to support learning although the quantity and quality of the tasks set is often limited. The quality of marking generally lacks consistency across the subject. Some teachers do not provide enough comments about what pupils need to do to improve their work.
98. Overall, the quality of learning is satisfactory. The majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs make at least satisfactory progress. Pupils are generally acquiring skills, knowledge and understanding well enough, although this is better in Years 10 and 11 than in other years. Poor attitudes of a minority of pupils are resulting in unsatisfactory progress being made in some lessons. Pupils usually apply themselves well to their tasks and make an effort, even though often many find the skills and concepts difficult. The productivity and pace of learning could be better in some classes. Pupils with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress.
99. Attitudes to learning are generally satisfactory. Those of older pupils are better than those of younger pupils. Behaviour is usually satisfactory but there are lessons where the behaviour of some pupils is unsatisfactory and this hinders the learning of other pupils. Pupils' attitudes are much better when they are given individual work to do than when they are expected to discuss ideas. Listening skills are not well developed. Often pupils have to be regularly reminded to pay attention and are not keen to participate in discussions. The presentation of work in books is generally satisfactory.
100. The day-to-day administration and organisation of the subject are good. Schemes of work are good. They have been updated to take account of the National Numeracy Strategy. The department handbook provides good information for the work of the department and the monitoring of teaching within the department is good. Staffing turnover and the unfilled positions of responsibility within the department are placing a heavy workload on the director of learning. Although there is a clear commitment to improvement, a much clearer focus on raising standards, especially in Years 7 to 9, is required. Pupils are assessed regularly and results are recorded. The available data, however, is not used well enough to monitor the subjects' performance, or to monitor the progress of individual pupils as they move through the school.
101. Good improvements have been made since the previous inspection. GCSE results have improved and the performance of boys has improved to match that of girls. Accommodation and the provision of textbooks have improved significantly. The curriculum structure now includes opportunities for grouping pupils according to their attainment. A marking policy is now in place and opportunities to use computers are included in schemes of work.

## SCIENCE

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

#### Strengths

- Planning and monitoring of teaching.
- Support for pupils with special educational needs.

#### Areas for improvement

- The use of assessment.
- Allocation and distribution of curriculum time.
- Provision of technician support.
- The achievement of higher attaining pupils is restricted by the lack of opportunities for independent learning.

103. Standards in science are well below average. Pupils enter the school with well below average standards. In the 2001 National Curriculum tests for at the end of Year 9, results were well below the national average. Results are similar to those in English and better than in mathematics, with girls doing slightly better than boys. Results improved at a slower rate than nationally over several years but have risen markedly since the time of the previous inspection in 2000. Teachers' assessments of pupils' standards at the end of Year 9 were much higher than the test results due to the use of inappropriate methods, which have since been changed.
104. In the 2001 GCSE examinations, double award science results were well below the national average. The trend in results over several years has been at a slower rate than nationally but in the last two years the proportion of pupils gaining grades A\*-C has more than doubled to its highest level so far. Girls obtained a higher proportion of grades A\*-C than boys, with proportionately more boys not being entered for the examination than girls.
105. In work seen during the inspection, standards are well below average in all years. Literacy standards are low in all years but are improving thanks to the emphasis given to key words and support for pupils' verbal and written expression. This focus on literacy, along with attention to behaviour, has led to improvements in test results in Year 9 and especially in GCSE examination results. Standards of numeracy remain low in all years and this is affecting standards in physical processes. Pupils' use of graphs remains at a simple level throughout and formulae calculations are kept to whole-number variations. The impact of information technology on standards of work is limited, particularly because the department has no data-loggers.
106. Pupils' overall achievement by the end of Year 9 is good. They enter school with low levels of attainment and the teaching that they receive, along with their own efforts, improves this standard over the three years. In Years 10 and 11, their achievement is satisfactory, leading them to gain GCSE results that are above those of similar schools. Overall achievement is affected by the lower than average amount of time available for teaching and many pupils' erratic attendance. Lower attaining pupils, pupils with special educational needs and the many pupils with English as an additional language, occasionally make better progress than others due to the support they receive. By contrast, higher attaining pupils do not always make the progress that they are capable of because the work they are given is insufficiently challenging. For example, many pupils in a Year 11 group could recall and use the idea of electron shell structure but the link of chemical identity coming from proton number and from electron number was not teased out in a lesson on structures and bonding.
107. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well thanks to good support in the laboratory from other science teachers and from learning assistants. Their teachers also tailor the tasks that they set and the resources that they use to pupils' needs. Those pupils with English as an additional language benefit from very good integration into all work, with opportunities to work on their verbal and written skills as well as their science. Both pupils and teachers are very conscious of the need to respect everybody's efforts. Equally, teachers come from an ethnically diverse range of backgrounds and provide the pupils with good role models of success in education.

108. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in all years. Of the lessons seen, the great majority of teaching was at least satisfactory and almost one-quarter was good. Whether permanent or temporary, all teachers plan and organise their lessons well. All staff work very hard to improve pupils' standards of behaviour. Quiet insistence on good behaviour, and support for those who need it, enable teaching and learning to proceed with few interruptions in most lessons. This has been achieved in a short space of time. At present, most teachers are not teaching a full timetable of classes but for a great deal of the rest of the time they are to be found in each other's classes providing the support that pupils need. Learning assistants also form an essential part of this support. The attention paid to exact syllabus work and rigorous training in examination questions helps many pupils achieve their potential in examinations. However, this strict adherence to a limited curriculum is restricting the achievement of higher attaining pupils and insufficient attention is paid to this problem.
109. When teaching is good, the pace is fast and the teacher enthusiastic about explaining science and making it fun for the pupils. For example, in a Year 10 class working on plate tectonics, there was good attention paid to a variety of activities. Lower attaining pupils made good progress in their learning as a result and the teacher's enthusiasm carried many pupils through the lesson who would otherwise have been uncooperative. In a Year 9 lesson on displacement reactions, pupils were encouraged to role-play the interaction of atoms during reactions, building on the fact that this was St Valentine's Day. Many lessons follow a set routine which pupils recognise and co-operate with. Learning objectives and key words are shared at the start and summarised at the end. There are many worksheets for pupils to follow and guides to support writing. Teachers use practical activities, diagrams and videos to illustrate points. This structure enables the majority of pupils to learn. However, this very routine can occasionally result in too much repetition, which pupils of many different abilities can find frustrating and minor misbehaviour results. Pupils in lower attaining classes frequently succeed because they are divided into sub-groups with different resources and with intense support for each group. This division into sub-groups happens in some higher attaining groups but work for higher attaining pupils is rarely rigorously thought out nor applied. At present there is little evidence of pupils being able to take control of their own learning in order to become more independent.
110. Teachers sometimes make provision in lessons for pupils to think about the application of their science to everyday life; for example the effects of acid rain. When this happens, pupils get good opportunities to think about and debate how science affects their lives. While such opportunities are included in the department's planning, they are not always taken up in practice, in lessons. The department provides a wide variety of opportunities outside lessons for pupils to build on their normal science learning. Clubs and extra lessons at lunchtimes and after school enable pupils to improve their coursework, revise specific topics or learn at a deeper level. Opportunities for broader, more fun activities are limited.
111. Pupils' attainment is monitored by frequent tests. Data from previous education is combined with test data to give teachers a comprehensive background for each of their pupils. This enables broad targets to be set and monitored. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and consistently according to the school's marking policy. However, none of the grades are recorded. Consequently, a vital source of information is lost and teachers have to rely on memory when setting progressive targets over a course of lessons.
112. Management of the department is good. Organisation and monitoring of teaching are intense, with systems and procedures to ensure that many more things are thought about and planned into lessons than is usual in most schools. The concentration on examination success and behaviour has brought about marked improvements in a short time. Staffing is currently stable but the department has been through a recent period of high staff turnover. The need for in-service training for inexperienced staff is being met and the whole department meets frequently to share experiences, to support each other and to work within the school's policies for improvement. All these areas represent improvements from the previous inspection.



113. Schemes of work lack an overview in terms of the most successful teaching and learning practices and little effort has been made to address some matters; for example, pupils' low numeracy skills. Training in the use of ICT to support learning is only just starting.
114. The distribution of time for science across Years 7-9 is irregular and results in up to six weeks loss of curriculum time before the national tests in Year 9. The curriculum time allocated to Years 10 and 11 is up to twelve weeks less than the average time committed to double award science in other schools. The provision of permanent technician support is very low. Despite this, the sole permanent technician does a satisfactory job of organising resources, as well as demonstrating the more hazardous experiments in class and supporting ICT. This level of support can only be maintained by one person for a short time. Both these issues were highlighted in the previous inspection and have not been resolved.
115. The design and decoration of the laboratories create a good learning atmosphere throughout the department. However, water leakage through the ceiling from the flat roof above mars this in several areas and active leaks create a hazard in one laboratory. Monitoring of maintenance is not satisfactory in some areas; for example a large number of bench taps need replacing. In addition staff do not, as yet, pay sufficient attention to dealing with health and safety issues while waiting for repairs to be made.
116. The science department has made satisfactory progress in the short time since the previous inspection. Very hard work has led to real strengths in the planning, delivery and monitoring of lessons. There have been consequent improvements in national tests at the end of Year 9 and especially in the proportion of A\*-C grades at GCSE. In order to improve, the department needs to make better use of assessment and provide more opportunities for independent learning, particularly for higher attaining pupils. The school needs to tackle the outstanding issues from the previous inspection: irregular curriculum time in Years 7-9, insufficient curriculum time in Years 10 and 11 and the very low level of technician support time.

## ART AND DESIGN

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

### Strengths

- Good teaching by all teachers in department.
- Good leadership and management of the department.
- Positive contribution to the multicultural values of the school.

### Areas for improvement

- Standardise procedures for monitoring and recording progress.
- Relate the marking scheme to National Curriculum levels.
- Improve provision and develop the use of ICT.

118. In 2001, teachers assessed pupils' standards at the end of Year 9 as well below average for their age. This is confirmed by work seen during the inspection. The proportion of pupils gaining GCSE grades A\*-C in 2001 was below average but was a great improvement on results of the previous year. Girls did particularly well and both girls and boys did better in art and design than most of their other subjects.
119. In work seen during the inspection at the end of Year 9, pupils are working at a well below average standard but their achievement over time is good when taking into account standards when they entered the school. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make similarly good progress to their classmates. Higher attaining pupils draw sensitively and use pattern effectively in very imaginative designs for masks inspired by aboriginal patterns and pictures of Hindu avatars - half human/half animal gods. Many pupils use tone effectively when drawing trees using charcoal, chalk and pencil and

work in monochrome is generally better than work using colour because painting techniques lack control and sensitivity.

120. In work seen during the inspection at the end of Year 11, pupils are working at a level below the national average, but this represents good achievement in relation to their standards of work at the end of Year 9. Most pupils show increasing control in drawing and painting and some higher attaining pupils produce stunning self-portraits and bold, lively drawings of skeletons from observation. Sculptural work is confident and challenging despite its recent introduction into the course. The influences of Giacometti and Henry Moore are noticeable in the work of all pupils. Higher attaining pupils understand concepts behind the work of artists and craftspeople from a variety of cultures and eras and explain, using the subject's technical language, how these relate to their own work.
121. Most pupils are keen to do well and participate eagerly in discussion and question and answer sessions. All teachers encourage pupils to use specialised vocabulary, which helps every pupil but especially those new to the English language. Behaviour is generally good and the few lapses that occur are dealt with swiftly and skilfully so that learning continues uninterrupted.
122. Consistently good teaching is responsible for the good learning that takes place in all years. Strengths lie in the good quality attention given to pupils in lessons, often enhanced by learning support assistants, ensuring good progress is made by all pupils including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. The effective use of visual aids and practical demonstrations helps all pupils to understand the aims of the lesson and allows pupils acquiring English to make similar progress to their classmates'. All teachers have high expectations to which pupils respond by trying hard to do their best. Teachers regularly record assessment data to chart pupils' progress. This process supports learning by giving early indications of underachievement and makes progress easier to understand for pupils and parents but it needs to be standardised throughout the department. Marking in sketchbooks in Years 7-9 is constructive and helpful but needs to relate more clearly to National Curriculum standards in order to aid progress. The lack of technician support means that teachers' time is taken up by routine maintenance, such as recycling clay and firing kilns. The time could be more profitably used for planning and development.
123. A noticeable atmosphere celebrating the multicultural nature of the pupils in the school pervades the work of the art department and enhances the good contribution the department makes to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural values of the school. The subject is led and managed well. A strong team of good teachers work well together and share a common vision for the continued raising of standards and increased breadth of the curriculum, set out clearly in a comprehensive action plan. Since the previous inspection, standards have been maintained despite disruptions to staffing and accommodation, resulting in a loss of provision for working on computers. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to use ICT, which restricts the range of their research or affects the creative development of their work. Pupils continue to achieve better in art and design than in most of their other subjects, especially boys who are often in the majority in classes. In order to further improve the achievement of boys and to broaden the curriculum in general, three-dimensional work has been introduced in all years, to include work in clay, wire and papier-mâché in addition to printmaking using lino and silk screens. As a result, progress has been good since the previous inspection.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

### Strengths

- Planning to meet the needs of all pupils.
- Good attitudes to the subject.
- Effective use of learning support assistants.

### Areas for improvement

- Monitoring of teaching and learning.

- |  |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving attendance.</li> <li>• Provision of appropriate resources.</li> </ul> |
|--|

125. In 2001, teachers assessed pupils' standards at the end of Year 9 as below average. This was confirmed by work seen during the inspection.
126. In 2001, GCSE examination results were below average for the proportion of pupils gaining grades A\*-C but average for the proportion of girls gaining grades A\*-G grades. Results were below average overall but above average for boys. No pupils gained the higher A\*-B grades, mostly as a result of difficulties pupils experience in answering examination questions because of their low levels of literacy.
127. In work seen during the inspection, standards are below the average at the end of Year 9 but by Year 11 they are close to average. This improvement is because of the attention teachers are giving to work sampling and feedback to pupils on how to improve. In addition, work that is carefully matched to pupils' needs provides appropriate challenge for all pupils. Many pupils have erratic patterns of attendance, which stops them meeting deadlines for their portfolios. This has a considerable effect on their marks.
128. Pupils with special educational needs make up a large proportion of the school population. Their progress is good because they develop good practical expertise, which helps to compensate for the difficulties they have with literacy. Pupils with English as an additional language make similar progress to their peers because they are well supported. Pupils who are identified as gifted and talented perform well in Years 9 and 10. This small group is challenged to reach their potential by being entered early for GCSE examinations.
129. The majority of pupils enter the school with very low standards. Their overall achievement by the end of Years 9 and 11 is good. In Years 7-9 skills, knowledge and understanding about a range of materials and ingredients grow rapidly. Pupils can cut, shape and join or combine materials and ingredients accurately and with a sense of quality. For example, in Year 8, pupils worked to very precise measurements using a marking gauge to ensure measurements were accurate for their lap joint. When evaluating their work, pupils often fail to record the process of development and modification of their design, especially when they design retrospectively, and so miss the opportunity of learning from their problem solving. During Years 7-9, there is no opportunity for pupils to test their capability by working on a more open task that demands decisions on how to solve particular problems. When this independent problem solving and decision making is required of them, in Years 10 and 11, without prior experience, they find the process difficult. However, improved modules of work in Years 7-9, with greater challenge are being tried out to help to raise standards. Portfolio work in Years 10 and 11 is benefiting from the improved feedback to pupils on the examination criteria and by the end of Year 11 standards are broadly average. This represents good achievement in relation to pupils' standards at the end of Year 9. Pupils produce accurate and useful models in graphics to test out their ideas and good design discussion results from these sessions. Higher attaining pupils show well developed research and investigation skills. Active, high quality, support staff make a difference to pupils' understanding and help them improve on their previous work. They work effectively alongside teachers. They probe pupils' responses to ensure work is understood. Good working drawings and the accurate use of dimensions are a feature of resistant materials and graphics.
130. The quality of teaching is good overall and is matched by the quality of learning. Poor attendance hampers some pupils' progress, particularly as pupils approach their examinations. Teachers and support staff have good knowledge and understanding and share the enthusiasm they have for their subject. Planning is done well. Teachers plan to meet pupils' individual needs and pupils' individual education plans are integrated into lesson planning. Teachers make use of digitised photographs to help pupils who have reading and writing difficulties to present their work in a different way. There are occasions, however, when the layout of the room works against the aims of the lesson. The rich cultural diversity of the school has an impact on much of the learning. For example, a very good display in the technology area of batik and printing on traditional costumes sets the tone for the construction and developmental work on garments in

textiles. Teachers are starting to make good use of assessment, but there are still some inconsistencies in marking across the team. Appropriate homework is set when required. Classroom management is good because pupils are purposefully involved in their work. The best teaching breaks the work down into short-term targets to be achieved in a step-by-step approach during the lesson. This allows pupils to improve and reflect on their learning at each stage. Teachers provide many opportunities for discussion and description, which consolidate learning. Often the use of visual material helps pupils to focus on the topic in hand.

131. Attitudes and behaviour are good because of teachers' high expectations and the emphasis they put upon pupils taking responsibility for their learning. In food technology, the organisation at the end of the lesson is as important as the practical work done during it. Personal development is very good. Pupils experience success in their practical work that raises their self-esteem and they have many good opportunities to work together in teams or groups.
132. The leadership and management of the department are good. The director of learning has vision and determination to raise standards for all pupils. He is guiding and developing the department but has only recently, with a full team, been able to consider delegating responsibility. Some teaching workshops within the department have shortcomings, for example inappropriate tables for graphics, limited tins and equipment in food technology that restrict choice and a lack of software to improve access to computer aided design and manufacturing. There is a good, succinct handbook, but little evidence of a planned approach to monitoring the application of the handbook's policies to teaching and learning. Technical support is limited in the department and puts extra pressure on the teachers, as they must prepare all practical materials in food and textiles, for example. Generally, the department has a good atmosphere for learning.
133. The department has made good progress since the previous inspection. Results are improving. Teaching has also improved and benefited from the early stages of performance management.

## GEOGRAPHY

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

### Strengths

- Staff commitment to improvement.
- Most pupils have good attitudes to the subject.

### Areas for improvement

- Assessment of work in Years 7-9.
- Time for teaching in Years 7-9.
- Leadership and management.

135. Overall standards in geography are well below average, but reflect satisfactory achievement in relation to pupils' attainment on entry.
136. Teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2001 show well below average attainment but current data is unreliable because procedures to determine the levels are not secure. Results in the 2000 GCSE examinations were well below the national average, but the relatively small numbers taking the examination prevents any further reliable statistical analysis. Currently, geography is not being studied in Years 10 and 11.
137. In work seen during the inspection, standards are well below average at the end of Year 9. Attainment is not as high as it could be because the school lacks a geography specialist and standards are affected adversely by an overall lack of teaching time across Years 7-9 as a result of timetabling arrangements. Absence also restricts the progress of some pupils. Although teachers work hard to encourage and support pupils in catching up with the work they have missed, pupils often have gaps in their notebooks that reflect similar gaps in their understanding.

138. Standards vary across the different teaching groups and sometimes according to topic. Some higher attaining pupils reach expected levels orally in geographical skills and knowledge but they often find it difficult to retain and express this understanding. For example, they grasp the principles of tectonics and volcanoes but find it difficult to explain how eruptions happen and how they affect the environment. Similarly, pupils in Year 9 show that they understand about the growth of tourism but are less comfortable about concepts, such as the need to balance the development of tourism with the maintenance of the environment. Pupils' weakness in the comprehension and communication of geographical ideas is due to more fundamental difficulties of verbal reasoning, rather than specifically geographical weaknesses, and results in well below average attainment in skills such as developing their own values and attitudes with regard to social, economic and political issues.
139. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. None of the teachers are specialists but pupils generally make satisfactory progress because teachers plan lessons according to a scheme of work that is rooted in important concepts such as mapping and physical geography; this informs teaching at all levels. For example, pupils learn about settlement in Year 7 and discover why London has a good site, before moving on in Year 8 to discover how cities and land use change over time, as when they note that old school playgrounds often become car-parks. The large numbers of pupils with special educational needs make sound progress because they receive helpful support from well organised and motivated learning support assistants who intervene appropriately to ensure that pupils understand what is being taught without spoon-feeding them. They respond well to this and concentrate well on learning tasks. More use could be made, however, of relevant videos, ICT and supporting maps and materials; this would make it possible for the mainly enquiry based approaches of the department to be developed to enable the pupils to work more effectively in groups and so develop more independence. Currently, too many lessons are over-directed by teachers with the result that there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to investigate, collect and process data and thus make links between theory and practice. Lessons are sometimes rushed and not enough time is given to careful questioning, with the result that pupils do not have time to consolidate their understanding.
140. When teaching is good, in about one-third of lessons, there is a sharp pace with good class control and constructive relationships. Some pupils in a lower attaining Year 7 class were not at first inclined to become involved in understanding population distribution. Good encouragement and questioning by the teacher, interspersed with humour, made them look for reasons why large landmasses, such as Australia, are not as densely populated as smaller areas such as Europe.
141. Most pupils have good attitudes to the subject; this is particularly the case when teaching is good and they are able to enjoy the lesson and to concentrate. Good examples were seen when Year 9 pupils researched details of La Clusaz before co-operating well in role-plays. However, standards are less high with regard to the presentation of written work. Analysis of exercise books showed that many do not produce either enough detail, or work that has a regard for appearance.
142. Teachers place an appropriate emphasis on the teaching of literacy skills. Planning stresses important geographical words such as 'weather', 'precipitation', 'vegetation' and 'decomposition'. However, more could be done to use ICT to enhance skills and understanding. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development: environmental issues are discussed and there is a useful contribution to local studies. Staff promote positive relationships and adults offer fine role models. Geography makes only a limited contribution to the development of pupils' numeracy skills and there is a need for a greater planned provision in this respect.
143. Currently, no head of department is in place because of recruitment difficulties and leadership and management are unsatisfactory. There is no clear curricular direction for the subject and the monitoring and evaluation of teaching have weaknesses. Nevertheless, those who teach the

subject work very hard to ensure that the scheme of work is taught to the best of their ability. They are supported by a good range of up-to-date textbooks and reproduced materials but there is a lack of globes, atlases and software to sharpen pupils' interest and sense of inquiry.

144. The department has made satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection: pupils' attitudes are much more positive and teachers have higher expectations; however, assessment and attainment require improvement if geography is to enhance its standing across the school.

## HISTORY

145. Overall, the quality of provision in history is **satisfactory**.

### Strengths

- Teaching is lively and purposeful.
- Pupils' attitudes are positive.
- Pupils are achieving satisfactorily in relation to their prior attainment.

### Areas for improvement

- Literacy skills.
- Organisation of the teaching of the history syllabus within the humanities faculty.

146. In all years, the standard of pupils' work is well below average. Achievement is satisfactory from a very low base on entry to the school. Teachers' assessments of standards at the end of Year 9 in 2001 were well below average. Work seen during the inspection supports this judgement. In 2001, 24 candidates were entered for the GCSE examination. Overall results were below average and the proportion gaining grades A\*-C was well below average but better than the previous two years' results and the best result in the last five years.
147. In work seen during the inspection, standards at the end of Year 9 are well below average. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of history are often at a higher standard than their ability to write. Pupils are keen to answer questions in class. In a Year 9 lesson on the fight for women's franchise, some pupils expressed themselves well, comparing opportunities for women a century ago and now. In another Year 9 class, pupils were interested to discuss moral issues during World War I, such as censorship of knowledge from the trenches. Pupils' learning is, however, hampered by their lack of general knowledge.
148. In work seen during the inspection at the end of Year 11, standards are well below average. Pupils' standards are pulled down significantly by weak literacy skills and by absence. Some pupils in Years 10 and 11 are reaching average standards. Achievement is satisfactory in relation to pupils' prior attainment. Pupils demonstrate the ability to acquire and consolidate historical information, fitting new knowledge successfully into an historical context. A Year 11 class worked out very well and in detail how Hitler reinforced his power in the 1930s and what his underlying motives were for his increasingly lawless actions.
149. Pupils respond well to interesting work, to orderly classrooms and to firm class management. In Years 7-9, most pupils have positive attitudes. Attitudes and behaviour have improved since the previous inspection. Pupils come to lessons expecting and prepared to work. Some are engaged by the topics studied, as in a Year 9 class when the expectations of volunteers for the army in 1914 were compared with the reality of the horrific life in the trenches. In most classes there is a serious working atmosphere. When individual pupils have a short span of concentration, classroom assistants are good at bringing them back to their work. Pupils settle quickly to written work. In only one lesson observed was behaviour unsatisfactory. In GCSE classes, motivation is high and concentration is steady. Pupils are keen to do well.
150. Overall, teaching is good. Teachers are competent historians and believe in the value of their subject for the young. All but one of the lessons observed were at least satisfactory and the majority was good or very good. All teachers take much trouble to prepare material to meet pupils' individual needs and make good efforts to vary activities in hour-long lessons. More

opportunities are needed for younger pupils to develop their oral skills. The pace of lessons is generally judged very well and kept sufficiently brisk. Just occasionally a task is allowed to go on too long or too much work is crowded at breakneck speed into one lesson. Very good emphasis is given to the teaching of specialised and general vocabulary. Teachers take great care not to assume the understanding of everyday words by pupils whose first language is not English. Insufficient time is given in class to improving the accuracy of pupils' writing. In every lesson, more attention needs to be given to basic writing skills such as capital letters and spelling. The art of story telling should not be forgotten. Learning in all lessons observed in Years 7-9 was at least satisfactory and in over half, learning was good. In the GCSE classes observed, learning was good or very good. Overall achievement is, however, affected by pupils' erratic attendance and low standards of literacy. Pupils in all years begin to think historically because they are trained in the evaluation of written and pictorial sources from Year 7. Recall of previous work is often good in both higher and lower attaining classes. This is an improvement from the previous inspection. One Year 7 class enthusiastically recalled details that they had learned about the Battle of Hastings in a later lesson. Pupils in GCSE classes learn very well because they question in depth and because the teacher's skill and enthusiasm motivate them. They are learning to use evidence to support their assertions. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are helped individually by teachers and support staff.

151. The head of the humanities faculty has been on maternity leave since May 2001. Within the faculty, history does not have a subject leader. As a result, strategic direction is lacking and dedicated teachers are working in isolation to some extent. They do try to share good practice but this needs to be given more attention. In the circumstances, improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory, however, the department needs to examine how much time is given to history over the first three years in the school. The balance of humanities subjects needs to be reconsidered. The way that the curriculum is organised affects learning. At present, certain classes do not study history for appreciable times in the school year and the loss of continuity has an adverse effect on achievement. The department has not yet developed the use of ICT as a tool for history. The department makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils appreciate religion as a vital factor in the lives of people in past centuries. They consider right and wrong in human behaviour continuously, such as in the treatment of underclasses like the villeins in the feudal system. Pupils' social and cultural development is assisted by consideration of societies very different from their own.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

152. Overall, the quality of provision in specialist information and communication technology is **satisfactory**. Provision for cross-curricular ICT is **unsatisfactory**.

### Strengths

- Improved provision of equipment.
- Technician support.
- Pupils' enthusiasm.
- The introduction of GNVQ.

### Areas for improvement

- The appointment of an ICT co-ordinator.
- The training of all teachers in ICT.
- Monitoring teaching of ICT across the curriculum.

153. In 2001, standards at the end of Year 9 were assessed by teachers as well below average. The boys' and girls' results were not analysed separately, but inspection evidence indicates that boys are performing better than girls.

154. In 2001, an ICT course was introduced in Year 10 to develop pupils' skill and application of ICT. The course is a new initiative and standards have not yet been tested by external examinations. The new course is an intermediate GNVQ in ICT. At present, pupils are working satisfactorily and the course is giving them an opportunity to complete units of work at their own rate. However, this course is an option and there are still approximately one quarter of pupils in Years 10 and 11 who have no access to computers during their external examination courses.
155. In work seen during the inspection, standards are below average by the end of Years 9 and 11. Although standards are higher than previously because a specialist course has been introduced, pupils' progress in using ICT is hindered because there is insufficient use of computers to support learning in departments across the school. High levels of absence also affect the continuity of learning. Additional difficulties affect standards. There is no head of subject and the school has had difficulties in finding suitably qualified staff. By the time pupils reach Years 10 and 11 they are not confident in using computers independently in their work because of their restricted experience in Years 7-9.
156. There is a wide range of attainment across the school. Many pupils, often the higher attainers, gain confidence by using computers at home or in the lunch time clubs. There is no lack of enthusiasm for using computers, but many pupils have difficulty in recalling skills learned recently and are too quick to call their teacher for support rather than working at the problem themselves. Often pupils' limited literacy skills cause additional problems. They are unable to use some of the problem solving icons of the computer confidently, such as the spell check, because they do not know which word to choose from those that the program offers. Some Year 8 pupils deal with this by always carrying a dictionary. Increased curriculum time in Years 7-9 is establishing a stronger foundation of skills. Pupils are able to practise their skills and when teaching is demanding pupils are put through their paces and enjoy their success. For example, Year 9 pupils were mounting an anti-smoking campaign and made good use of the Internet to collect images to import into their Power Point presentation to give a greater impact to getting their message across. Pupils generally, however, do not know their level of capability and are not aware of what they must do to improve. Targets in their reports are unclear and feedback to pupils through marking is inconsistent. In Years 10 and 11 pupils make practical use of computers through work in the units of their GNVQ in health and social care, leisure and tourism and business as well as ICT. The major impact for Years 10 and 11 is in research, analysis of data and general presentation. The breadth of study for computer work is constrained by the lack of cross-curricular ICT. Most departments in the school are failing to meet their statutory requirement to use ICT to support learning. In subjects such as geography there is limited use of data logging to measure and compare results and the science department has no data loggers. In design and technology there is good use of ICT but not enough opportunity to use computer aided design and manufacture. The English department has recently developed effective use of ICT, which has had a good effect on presentation and research.
157. Pupils' overall achievement across Years 7-9 and Years 10-11 is satisfactory. The introduction of a specialist course for Years 7-9 has aided progress. Pupils are able to gain a collection of new skills to improve their presentation and understanding, but their limited use of annotation to record where their work has improved, misses an opportunity to reinforce learning. The inconsistent use of ICT across the curriculum means that there are few chances for pupils to sharpen their skills by using them on a regular basis to solve problems in other subjects. Pupils do not have a 'can do' check list where they can record skills they gain both independently and as part of their planned curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language achieve at a similar rate to their peers because of the effective use of support staff in lessons. The independent learning system that has been introduced in the special educational needs department is not yet used sufficiently well to have a full impact on progress. Higher attaining pupils reflect on their learning and take advantage of all opportunities to gain additional skills. The GNVQ courses in Year 11 have an element of ICT included in the key skills for each course. This gives pupils good skills that can be adapted for use in a work environment.



158. Teaching and learning in subjects across the curriculum are unsatisfactory overall, with a few examples of good teaching that produces better learning, because computers are not used enough across the school to support learning. Teaching of specialist courses is satisfactory overall. When teaching of specialist ICT is very good, pupils of a wide range of attainment are driven to achieve their best results. Teachers plan well to match the needs of all, with sharp time and learning targets, clear expectations of results and confident high quality guidance to pupils. Pupils respond well. Otherwise satisfactory lessons have many of these qualities but lack the use of time targets to drive learning and keep up the pace of teaching and learning. Often, in these less successful lessons, pupils are very dependent on their teacher to solve their problems. Teachers emphasise literacy and numeracy in their teaching and try to enhance learning by introducing skills such as spreadsheets at a time when more complex calculations are needed.
159. There have been difficulties in recruiting a full team of teachers in this shortage subject area. Although this has an impact on the development of ICT teaching in the school, the support from the senior management team has been good in respect of improving the provision of hardware and software to challenge and support learning. An outstanding technical support team provides good support for teaching and learning. The technical support has helped to guide development of the school intranet and the senior technician has worked with a Channel 4 webmaster to begin to develop the school's web site. The technical team also monitors lunchtime clubs. The school has given considerable time to preparing parents and pupils for the successful introduction of the Internet. There is a user's agreement and the technical team regularly monitors the appropriateness of pupils' use of the Internet.
160. Leadership and management of ICT are unsatisfactory and the subject lacks clear educational direction because currently there is no co-ordinator to draw all aspects of the subject together. The member of the senior management team with oversight responsibility for ICT has a clear plan for development. The development plan promotes the school's aims and objectives for raising standards, but there is no middle management support or structure to ensure monitoring, assessment, or curriculum development. Local initiatives and financial support are used prudently to improve the provision for ICT. The technical team and equipment available are strengths of the department. The team researches new equipment and programmes so that the best value for money is obtained. All subjects have access to computers with the exception of art and design, where the equipment is not appropriate for the task. Projectors linked to computers support whole-class teaching but in some rooms there is no briefing area to make best use of the equipment.
161. The previous report was positive with few issues but expectations and statutory requirements have changed - at present the school is not able to meet those requirements because of the management issue. Nevertheless, improvement in equipment and the introduction of new courses contribute to satisfactory improvement in specialist ICT since the previous inspection. Improvement in cross-curricular ICT has been unsatisfactory.

## MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

### Strengths:

- Attitudes are positive throughout.
- Teachers have very good subject knowledge.

### Areas for improvement:

- Meeting statutory requirements for all pupils in Years 10 and 11.
- Providing material matched to pupils' needs in Years 7-9.
- The use of assessment to monitor pupils' progress and to guide planning.
- Suitable resources for learning.
- Quality of teaching.

163. Standards are well below average in French throughout the school. Pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory in Years 7-9 because some teachers do not adapt the material available so that suitable progress can be made in lessons. Pupils' progress in lessons is better in Year 10 and 11 where teaching is clearly focused on the demands of the examination and their overall achievement is satisfactory.
164. At the end of Year 9, teachers' assessments show that pupils were working well below the level expected for their age in 2001 and this was confirmed by work seen during the inspection.
165. The 2001 GCSE examination results in French were well below the national average, but they show a considerable improvement from the previous year. However, a smaller proportion of pupils is entered for an examination in French than is the case nationally. Girls obtain better results than boys, in line with the national picture. Pupils achieve almost half a grade lower in French than in their other subjects.
166. In work seen during the inspection, standards are well below average at the end of Year 9. Progress in lessons is unsatisfactory overall. Some pupils are very confident when speaking, but many do not have enough opportunity to listen to French or to speak it. As a result, they find it difficult to make progress. Teachers do not have a consistent approach to reading and writing and are hindered by the lack of appropriate materials for all pupils. The textbook available is rarely used because it is not appropriate and there is a reliance on worksheets that vary in quality. There is great variation in the type of work done in lessons, depending on the teacher. Some Year 7 pupils have a high level of oral fluency, which they are keen to demonstrate by having an extended conversation about themselves, their families and where they live. Others are restricted by teaching methods to copying vocabulary and repeating individual words. By the end of Year 9, some pupils are able to talk about their pocket money, and to write clear sentences in the present tense describing how they spend it. They do not routinely use the past and future tenses in writing or in speaking; this is necessary for them to reach average National Curriculum standards. A number of pupils only have one hour per week of French and this is not enough for them to cover the programme of study. Pupils with special educational needs make the same progress as other pupils. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress because many have good skills in learning languages. There are no significant differences in the standards of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds or in the standards of boys and girls. Standards in literacy and numeracy are very low, and opportunities to exploit these are missed in some lessons. For example, although attention is paid to developing dictionary skills, there are no key words displayed in language rooms. Number games do not routinely feature in lessons. There is no whole-class use of ICT.
167. About half the pupils in Years 10 and 11 do not study a modern foreign language, despite the statutory requirement that they should. In work seen during the inspection by the end of Year 11, standards are well below average for those pupils studying French but represent satisfactory achievement in relation to their standards at the end of Year 9. The change to written coursework instead of a writing examination is helpful, and some pupils write competently using a range of tenses. However, many find this difficult and their writing is restricted to lists and short tasks. When teachers focus on developing speaking and listening, and consolidate this through reading and writing, standards are higher. Some pupils take great delight in pronouncing correctly, and are able to produce complex oral sentences that demonstrate a good level of understanding.
168. Pupils show interest and enthusiasm in their work in most lessons. Behaviour is satisfactory and pupils and teachers often work well together. Pupils are usually well motivated.
169. The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory overall as is the quality of learning. They are both unsatisfactory in Years 7-9, but broadly satisfactory overall in Years 10 and 11 because lessons relate more closely to the demands of the GCSE examination and the material used is more appropriate to pupils' needs. Teachers have very good subject knowledge but do not take advantage of this by consistently using French as the main means of communication in class.

Consequently, pupils do not always make the progress they should. An unsatisfactory lesson with Year 9 did not have clear objectives, lacked pace and challenge and involved little use of spoken French. As a result pupils made unsatisfactory progress in their learning. On the other hand, a Year 10 class undertook role-play work on hotels and made very good progress. Pupils co-operated well with each other and took pride in their correct pronunciation. Their learning was reinforced through a wide range of appropriate activities in the other skills of reading, writing and listening. Overall, the course book that is available is not appropriate for the majority of pupils. Not enough use is made of appropriate resources. In some lessons no use is made of tape and therefore pupils do not have enough opportunity to hear foreign voices. Little use is made of video, despite the fact that there are readily available videotapes that would stimulate pupils' interest and add variety to lessons. Teachers' planning does not always reflect the needs or abilities of the pupils, so that time is spent unproductively. Some teachers do not have the necessary skills to work with a full range of teaching methods. As a result, pupils sometimes find it hard to acquire the necessary understanding and skills. Assessment is not used effectively to monitor pupils' progress or to guide curriculum planning.

170. The teaching of Chinese and Portuguese is being phased out. All lessons seen were satisfactory and pupils were making satisfactory progress. Portuguese is only taught to native speakers, who regularly achieve above average results at GCSE. Chinese is taught to a range of pupils, although only to a small number. Results have suffered because of staffing difficulties but are again above average at age 16.
171. Since the previous inspection, the main change has been the reduction in the teaching of other languages. Although there is better co-ordination of Chinese and Portuguese, management continues to be unsatisfactory. Consequently, there has not been enough progress in raising the standard of teaching, linking work to National Curriculum standards, the use of ICT, ensuring that statutory requirements are met by providing teaching for all pupils who have not been disappplied from the National Curriculum and the use of appropriate resources.

## MUSIC

172. Overall, the quality of provision in music is **unsatisfactory**.

### Strengths

- Good teaching, which challenges and motivates pupils.
- Teaching inculcates respect for the achievement of others and good behaviour.
- Pupils' attitudes are good.

### Areas for improvement

- Time allocated for music is unsatisfactory in Years 7-9.
- There is no provision for pupils in Years 10 and 11.
- There is no use of ICT in the music curriculum.
- There is no head of department to give appropriate leadership.

173. Standards attained in music at the end of Year 9 in 2001 were well below the national average. GCSE results were below the national average, although the small number of candidates entered makes this judgement not fully reliable.
174. In work seen during the inspection, standards by the end of Year 9 are below average. This represents satisfactory achievement, given that many pupils enter the school with well below average attainment in the subject. Standards are higher than in previous years because of improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils' better attitudes to learning. There is no significant difference in achievement between boys and girls or between different ethnic groups of pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and with English as an additional language are well integrated: their achievement is satisfactory. There are currently no GCSE courses running in Years 10 and 11.

175. The highest attaining pupils in Year 9 show musical ability of the level expected for their age. For example, in lessons on African music a few pupils sang a song well by memory, accompanying this at the same time with simple drumming patterns and highlighting the structure of the music. However, the majority of pupils are at the stage of improvising simple rhythms and creating basic musical forms from them. In Year 8, pupils are beginning to improvise sensitively on keyboards melodic fragments drawn from the Indian "rag yemen". Pupils are willing to sing in class, but do this inconsistently with little awareness of the disciplines necessary to produce rewarding results. They are able to associate musical gestures with symbols, such as graphic scores, or with mnemonic aids, such as the sonic terms used in African drumming. However, only those taking individual tuition can use formal musical notation. Many are able to use appropriate vocabulary in appraising musical performance.
176. Pupils enjoy making music and this helps build their confidence and self esteem. Neatly presented exercise books are evidence that they take pride in their work. Although in Year 7 pupils are at times restless, in other years they work well by themselves preparing improvisations and performances, needing only discreet support from their teachers. Pupils are encouraged to respect others, listening attentively to performances and applauding one another's achievements. They have an open mind to different styles and traditions in music.
177. The quality of teaching in Years 7-9 is good and promotes good learning. Teachers use a good variety of methods to reinforce pupils' learning. For example, gesture and mnemonic aids assist in developing pupils' musical memories; insistence on pupils performing their own created compositions twice moves them from the process of improvisation to that of composition. Clear explanations and high expectations mean that the majority of pupils work purposefully in individual and group work. Teachers' subject knowledge and skills are motivating to pupils. This was most evident in the African drumming and singing project in Year 9. Class management is good. The way teachers use rooms, space and resources strengthens this. Pupils seldom misbehave. On one occasion a particularly restless and uncooperative pupil was sent by the teacher to a colleague, who not only calmed the pupil, but also persuaded him to make up the ground lost by the withdrawal. On return to the class, the pupil sang alone the song he had missed, to the appreciation of staff and pupils. This, in turn, gave him the self-esteem to participate fully and actively in the remainder of the lesson. Teachers set clear demands of both the performers and the 'audience' when pupils present practical work. This helps pupils to develop their critical faculties. They feel that their opinions are respected in the assessment and good oral feedback on their achievements. They are encouraged to express themselves and appraise others using the technical vocabulary of the subject. Different teachers use the same assessment criteria, developing consistent standards between different classes. The teaching of singing lacks rigour. While individuals sometimes sang shorter songs well, the Chinese song being learned in Year 7 was poorly selected, presenting too many rhythmic and melodic difficulties for pupils at this stage. Some lessons are not sufficiently structured to give time for explanation of homework tasks or to finish assessments of pupils' presentations. However, pupils are so motivated that they return in breaks for their assessments. Exercise books are inconsistently monitored and important spellings therefore go uncorrected. Pupils of differing attainment levels are well catered for. For example, the lessons in Year 9 are structured so that pupils can present simple improvised rhythms or more complex layered music for their assessments. The development of speaking skills is encouraged well. A pupil in Year 8 with emotional and behavioural difficulties, supported by a learning assistant with musical knowledge, concentrated all through the lesson and produced a very confident improvisation.
178. Standards in music have the potential to be much higher. Achievement is affected by lack of time. In Years 7-9, pupils only receive tuition for half of the time recommended for the teaching of music in the National Curriculum. The leadership and management of the subject is unsatisfactory because there is no head of music. This hinders the development of a coherent long-term policy. Nevertheless, the curriculum is well balanced to tie in with themes covered in the other arts and to present music well suited to pupils' social and ethnic backgrounds. The small class sizes mean that teachers are able to support pupils very effectively. However, the lack of time allocated to music creates a considerable lack of breadth and opportunity. Modern technologies are notably absent, although the department has computers and keyboards able to

be put into service. The use of assessment to guide curricular planning is unsatisfactory. Reports to parents are unsatisfactory. Pupils do not receive an end of year report in music if the carousel system of half-termly courses means that they have not been taking music at the end of the year. Year 9 reports do not give the National Curriculum levels attained by the pupils. Targets do not match the elements of the National Curriculum. Some 25 pupils sing in the school choir. This group contributes effectively to intensifying spiritual aspects of assemblies and focuses much of its regular rehearsal time on giving expression to spiritual values. Moral attitudes, such as respect and discussion of what makes something good or bad, are a regular feature of lessons. Socially and culturally, there are also many opportunities for the pupils. The school has many links with community projects, such as the Roundhouse Singing Challenge and the Oval House summer school for gifted musicians, which enable pupils to extend their musical experience. Pupils also have the opportunity of taking guitar and percussion lessons.

179. Overall, the subject has made satisfactory progress since the previous report. The quality of teaching and learning and the attitudes and behaviour of the pupils have markedly improved. The subject contributes much more to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. However, several key issues still need urgent attention. These are: the amount of time allocated to music in Years 7-9; the opportunity to study music in Years 10 and 11; the appropriate integration of modern technology into the music programme. The urgency of appointing a well-qualified head of music cannot be stressed enough, if these deficiencies are to be tackled and current good practice thereby strengthened.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

180. Overall, the quality of provision for physical education is **satisfactory**.

### Strengths

- Good teaching and very good support in lessons.
- Good progress is made by pupils of different abilities.
- The extra-curricular provision is good.

### Areas for improvement

- The time allocation for the subject in Year 7 and Year 9 is too low to teach the statutory curriculum successfully.
- The accommodation is unsatisfactory.

181. In work seen during the inspection, pupils attain average standards by the end of Year 9. This is a higher standard than the results of teachers' assessments in 2001. Pupils enter the school with below average basic skills but show good achievement to reach the standard required after three years. Pupils demonstrate basketball, volleyball and badminton basic skills in line with the national standard. In basketball, they can dribble with control, but shooting is inconsistent. Passing improves to an average standard by the end of Year 9. Many of the skills break down when a small team game is introduced because the pupils have little awareness of other team players. In badminton there is a variety of abilities but, overall, the serving and returning are at the standard expected for pupils of this age. In other classes, mainly volleyball, a lack of basic techniques affects progress to the full game. Pupils are given the opportunity to evaluate their work and about half of the pupils have a good understanding of tactics and strategies. There is no significant difference in standards between pupils from different backgrounds. Some pupils miss the physical education lesson in Year 7 when they are withdrawn for extra English.
182. Results in GCSE examinations in 2001 were well below average for the proportion of pupils gaining A\*-C grades but above for A\*-G grades. The option is popular and all the pupils who enter are placed in the appropriate examination group, either the short or long course. Standards of the present Year 11 group are below average in theory work but improving on last year's results. Their practical work is progressing well and skills, particularly the smash in badminton, are above average. Overall, standards are broadly average. Year 10 pupils are not at the same standards because of lower literacy skills and standards are below average. Practical

standards are better and passing in basketball is accurate. All the Year 11 pupils have the opportunity to develop other activities at a nearby sports centre. Outside coaches assist in promoting standards in badminton and weight training. There are inter-school fixtures that provide opportunity for the more talented to test their skill. The lower attainers in the subject have the same opportunity to improve their standard because of the very good support teaching and the appropriate matching of tasks to different abilities. Achievement is satisfactory overall. Pupils following the standard course make satisfactory progress and reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 11.

183. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are satisfactory. Behaviour is boisterous but satisfactory in lessons and around the changing areas. Relationships between pupils are positive and they welcome visitors. They co-operate with each other during lessons but tend to mock mistakes made by their peers unless checked. Attendance is low in some lessons and this affects the continuity of learning.
184. The overall quality of teaching is good and is occasionally very good. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen during the inspection. Good planning is a feature of the good and very good teaching especially for the GCSE Year 11 theory group. Support staff positively influence the direction of many lessons. Continuity and progress are adversely affected by the short time allocated for teaching in Years 7-9. Generally classes are actively involved in lessons and many pupils take responsibility for their own warm up. They are given the opportunity to evaluate their work and comment on their own and other's work. Progress increases when class management is good and the organisation of lessons into pairs and groups is competently arranged. Sensible use of resources allows pupils the opportunity to develop at their own rate. Homework is set and marked consistently in Years 10 and 11. On occasions, lack of challenge, rigour and independent learning opportunities prevent higher standards being reached. Explanations at the beginning of lessons are well delivered and the use of a white board helps to clarify positional play. Teachers' demonstrations promote quality in basic movements and their feedback at the end of each lesson consolidates learning. Not enough use is made of ICT to support learning, particularly with the GCSE theory groups. Generally, the good teaching in the department accelerates the rate of pupils' progress. Pupils of all abilities make good progress because teachers match tasks well to their individual needs.
185. Meagre time allocation for Years 7-9 and the inoperative swimming pool put constraints on meeting National Curriculum requirements. The range of activities provided is narrow because of the absence of on-site playing fields. In Years 10 and 11 there is an opportunity to opt for a GCSE course in physical education and use the facilities of a local sports centre. Provision for extra curricular sport is good and about 40 per cent of pupils take part despite unsatisfactory facilities. Assessment procedures and schemes of work are very well documented and used. Future planning is in place but is dependent on whole-school priorities for improvement in accommodation. The staff work well together and learning support provided for pupils in lessons is very good. Leadership and management are good in spite of the curriculum and accommodation issues. The resources for games and gymnastics are satisfactory. The school lacks playing fields and outdoor work is carried out on an uneven hard play area. The two gymnasia are inadequate for badminton and volleyball but are satisfactory spaces for games practices and gymnastics.
186. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory overall. Standards are much the same in Years 7-9. The swimming pool is still being repaired. However, teaching is now good overall; the department is well led and managed; support teaching is very good; pupils are progressing and GCSE results have improved. Areas for future improvement include increasing time allocation for Year 7; developing the use of ICT and improving facilities so that the department can meet statutory requirements for pupils in Years 7-9.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

#### Strengths

- Good teaching.
- Good subject leadership.
- Significant improvement since the previous inspection.

#### Areas for improvement

- More curriculum time for religious education, especially in Years 10 and 11, in order to
- comply with statutory requirements.
- More specialist religious education teaching.

188. No pupil has as yet taken a public examination in religious education. In work seen during the inspection, standards are below average, particularly in Year 10; no pupils in Year 11 are able to study religious education. Year 7 pupils in the higher attaining classes reach average standards. Many are held back by low levels of literacy, although a good number of pupils bring some knowledge and understanding of religion from their own backgrounds. Standards by the end of Year 9 are below average, mainly because not enough time is allocated time in Years 7-9 for them to cover the local Agreed Syllabus adequately. However, given the low levels of literacy of the majority of pupils when they enter the school, their achievement is satisfactory in the work that they do in the time available. This applies to all pupils, regardless of gender, special educational needs, or ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. They are able to discuss important concepts with some confidence and to write adequately on many of the aspects of the syllabus. Sound notes are made, though limited in scope, particularly by older pupils who have less time provided for religious education. Many pupils use computers for their written work, both at home and at school. Some good examples of work done on the Obituary to Muhammad was seen in the form of wall displays using desktop publishing techniques.
189. Teaching is good overall, and pupils learn well in the lessons they have. There is only one specialist teacher, whose knowledge and understanding of the subject are good. Lessons are well planned and classes well managed. Resources such as worksheets are widely used, and pupils are given opportunities to read, write, speak and listen in most lessons. Skilful use of questions helps the teacher to assess how much pupils have learned. Sometimes, this builds on research topics set for homework. For example, Year 7 pupils found out about the way their birth had been celebrated in their families, and this was used as a basis for further investigation into rites of passage. Pupils also contribute to their own learning by offering information in lessons, often drawing on their own experience. The use of support staff also promotes learning, particularly for those pupils with English as an additional language.
190. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils are satisfactory overall. In some lessons, positive attitudes contribute to learning. In a few, there are examples of boisterous behaviour, with some pupils calling out. Usually, teachers are able to deal with this effectively, and there are good relationships between teachers and pupils in most lessons. Many pupils want to make their lessons a worthwhile experience. Two Year 10 girls volunteered to sing a song to the whole class at the end of one of their lessons.
191. Religious education is taught within humanities, and is currently often taught in Years 7-9 by the same teacher who is responsible for the history and geography lessons of that class. This arrangement has the virtue of helping the teacher to know the pupils better, but has disadvantages, and the school does not intend to continue in this way. Apart from anything else, it means that the one specialist religious education teacher is being underused in her specialism. In Years 7-9, all but the two higher attaining classes have to cover the syllabus in well under the recommended time, because three subjects are being taught in two periods per week. This clearly affects standards. The impact is even greater in Years 10 and 11. Year 10 pupils, who have begun studying the GCSE short course, have one period each week of religious education for just one-third of the year, under a carousel arrangement. Not enough time is provided to meet the requirements of the syllabus. Fourteen pupils have chosen to take the full GCSE course, which is an encouraging step. However, the fact that currently no religious education is taught in Year 11 means that the school is failing to comply with statutory

requirements. There are plans to improve the provision next year: it is vital that this happens. Pupils are not receiving their entitlement; this detracts from the provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, to which religious education makes a good contribution where it is taught.

192. The subject is well led and managed. There was no subject co-ordinator at the time of the previous inspection. In this respect alone there has been significant improvement. Schemes of work, based on the local Agreed Syllabus, are now in place, non-specialist teaching is monitored and supported, resources have been updated and GCSE courses, both short and full, have been introduced. The task is not yet finished, but the capacity to improve further is now clear.

## VOCATIONAL COURSES

193. Overall, the quality of provision in vocational courses is **satisfactory**.

### Strengths

- Teaching is good.
- Additional provision for pupils.

### Areas for improvement

- Provision for ICT in Years 7-9 as a preparation for the GNVQ course..
- A designated base for vocational courses.

194. The school has introduced the intermediate GNVQ as an additional examination choice in Years 10 and 11. This choice is a response to the needs of pupils who benefit from the short-term targets offered by the units that make up a full GNVQ, rather than the end of course examination for GCSE. The school offers a range of options and pupils can select from four areas including business education, health and social care, ICT and leisure and tourism.
195. Attainment is generally below average; in ICT it is well below. Where pupils complete all units, the pass rate is improving but is still below average. Poor attendance has an impact on the higher levels attained. For example, fewer pupils reach the merit and distinction award because low attendance and literacy difficulties affect the standards they can achieve. Key skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT are integrated effectively throughout the courses to maintain pupils' learning of basic skills. For many pupils the application of these skills contributes strongly to their overall improvement in communication. However, the unsatisfactory provision for ICT in Years 7-9 is having a negative effect on attainment in the GNVQ-ICT course.
196. Achievement is very good in business education, good in leisure and tourism and health and social care but unsatisfactory in ICT. Following good written and verbal feedback from their teachers, the majority of pupils eventually present their units of work in a well-structured style. In ICT, pupils have a casual attitude to this feedback; they do not always value or use the teachers' advice. Consequently, their improvement is limited. Absence and lack of continuity also affect their progress.
197. Teaching is good overall. The strongest teaching, in business education, challenges pupils through effective and stimulating, simulation exercises. For example, in a lesson on business enterprise, pupils divided into teams and worked at forming a company. Guidance from the teacher on business legislation and human resource management sparked enthusiastic discussion and very good results. The elected company managers led the development of their company and its product, then fed back to the whole group the reasons for their company decisions. The success of the session was in the active participation of all pupils, the decision making required and the independence engendered by the teacher working hard to facilitate learning, rather than controlling the session. When there was unsatisfactory learning in ICT, teaching was just satisfactory. Pupils' attitudes, literacy skills and attendance pattern reduced the learning possible. The pupils had very limited ICT skills, they were lazy in their approach to



their work and relied too heavily on the teacher. Although these lessons are well staffed with good support teachers, pupils lack the drive to be independent learners and they find skills, such as research and analysis, too difficult to contemplate. In health and social care and leisure and tourism, pupils work with diligence. However, they often work on their own, and so miss the opportunity to share and develop their learning. Teachers have good command of these two subjects and plan to give pupils greater responsibility for their learning; again erratic attendance has a major impact on learning.

198. Management of GNVQ provision is good. The school has selected the GNVQ approach to develop pupils' independence and to continue the concentrated work on basic skills through Years 10 and 11. The courses are an effective and valuable addition to the curriculum. At present there is no designated base, which hinders effective learning because lessons are often taught in small rooms, without immediate access to audio-visual aids and computers. The effect is to place limits on the wide variety of tasks that is necessary for successful GNVQ courses.