

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **RANGE HIGH SCHOOL**

Formby, Liverpool

LEA area: Sefton

Unique reference number: 104953

Headteacher: Mr M J Dixon

Reporting inspector: Dr Kenneth C Thomas  
3390

Dates of inspection: 4 – 6 December 2000

Inspection number: 223851

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 - 18

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Stapleton Road  
Formby  
Liverpool

Postcode: L37 2YN

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Councillor E Storey

Date of previous inspection: 16 October 1995

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## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>22</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Range High School is a mixed community comprehensive school for pupils aged 11-18 in Formby and Sefton Local Education Authority. The school has 1175 pupils and this makes it bigger than similar schools with a sixth form. The school is oversubscribed and the number of pupils in the school has risen by about six per cent since the last inspection. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. There are few ethnic minority pupils and the very few pupils with English as an additional language all speak English fluently. The standards of attainment of pupils coming into the school, although wide-ranging, are above the national average, overall. The school is Sefton's only designated secondary school for physically disabled pupils. As a consequence the proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs, at 3.4 per cent, is above the national average. The overall proportion of pupils with special educational needs, at 10.1 per cent is below the national average. There are close links with other schools, colleges and the youth service and community education courses are provided in the evenings.

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

Range High School is a very good school. Standards are well above average and rising because good teaching with high expectations enable pupils to make the most of the good opportunities provided. The head teacher and senior management team provide very effective leadership and they are well supported by the governors. There is a strong sense of a learning community in which relationships are very good. Very good support is provided for pupils with special needs. The sixth form is cost effective and the school provides good value for money.

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

- Standards at the end of Year 9 and Year 11 are well above average. They are above average in the sixth form.
- Good teaching with high expectations succeeds in motivating pupils.
- Pupils' attitudes are excellent: they contribute well to their own learning and the life of the school.
- Very effective leadership is promoting very good standards and good teamwork.
- The school makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs and there is an effective inclusion programme to which all staff are committed.
- Pupils' learning and interest in school is enhanced by a very good range of extra-curricular opportunities from which many pupils benefit.

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

- Provision for information and communications technology in Years 10 and 11.
- The accommodation for art, music and physical education.

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

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

The school was last inspected in October 1995 and received a commendation at that time from the Chief Inspector as one of the best schools inspected. The school has made very good progress since that time. Teaching has improved and planning for the range of levels at which pupils are working is generally good. Standards of attainment in the National Curriculum tests, taken at the end of Year 9, have risen in line with the national trend, while standards in the GCSE examination, taken at the end of Year 11, have risen above the national trend. Parents recognise that this is an improving school and the school is oversubscribed by about 30 per cent. Very good progress has been made in the use of assessment information to set targets and monitor progress. The teaching of social and personal education is now more consistent. Accommodation and resources for information and communications technology have been improved and funding has been obtained and two new science laboratories are about to be built. However, accommodation for art, music and physical education remains inadequate.

Attention has been given to all health and safety issues identified in the last report. The school does not meet the requirement for an act of worship. All of the strengths identified in the last report, including very good relationships, have been maintained. Very effective leadership, planning and use of targets mean that the school is well placed to further improve its provision and the standards pupils achieve.

## STANDARDS

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

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

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Pupils make good progress and achieve well at Range High School, and results in the National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Year 9 have been improving at the same rate as the national trend. Overall results have been consistently well above the national average and well above average in comparison with similar schools. In 2000 results in mathematics were well above average and in the highest 5 per cent nationally in comparison with similar schools. Results in English and science were well above average and well above average in comparison with similar schools. Whilst boys and girls achieve similar standards in science and mathematics, girls tend to outperform boys in English. The overall standards achieved by the end of Year 9 represent good progress and achievement from entry to the school at the start of Year 7.

GCSE results show sustained improvement since the last inspection. In 2000, the results were well above average both in comparison with all schools and with similar schools. These results represent at least satisfactory and for many pupils good progress and achievement from the end of Year 9. Pupils did well in English and mathematics, where results were well above average. The school enters about ten times more pupils for the GCSE examination in the separate science subjects of biology, chemistry and physics than schools nationally with the consequence that overall results were below average. Nevertheless, these results represented satisfactory progress from the end of Year 9. Results in dual award science were average. Results in art and German were above average while results in all other subjects were well above average. Girls outperformed boys in all subjects other than geography.

Overall results at A level have been well above average since the last inspection. The 2000 results, although just below those achieved in 1999, were above average and represent satisfactory achievement and progress from GCSE. Well above average results were achieved in biology, English literature, design and technology, geography and mathematics. All test and examination results are monitored carefully and challenging targets are set for individual subjects and for the school overall. These are helping to raise standards further.

In lessons and work seen, standards at the end of Year 9 and Year 11 are above national expectations. In the sixth form, standards are at least in line with course expectations. Individual pupils achieve highly in extra-curricular activities.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are very committed to their learning and keen to succeed.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good in lessons and around the school. Pupils are considerate, respectful and friendly. The number of exclusions is very low.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils respond very well to the many opportunities to show initiative and to take responsibility. Participation rates in extra-curricular activities are high.
Attendance	Good. Consistently above the national average. The school continues to make strenuous efforts to maintain good levels of attendance.

The climate for learning is excellent and based upon very good relationships throughout the school. The school rules are clearly understood and, overall, behaviour is very good. Incidents of bullying are few and they are dealt with firmly. Pupils have excellent attitudes and learn well. They are supportive of each other and show good levels of self-discipline. The school is vigilant in following up absence, of which very little is unauthorised.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching and learning was good or better in 87 per cent of lessons and satisfactory in all of the rest. Teaching is good in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Particular strengths of teaching are the effective use of teachers' subject knowledge to give clear explanations and guide pupils' learning. Expectations are high and teachers are good role models. Pupils are very well managed. Teachers' planning is mostly good and this, together with the effective use of assessment, help pupils to learn systematically. Pupils are provided with many opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy skills, although not in a co-ordinated way across all subjects. Planning for information and communications technology lessons is very good, but a lack of resources prevents the full use of information and communications technology in, for example science and design and technology. Planning for pupils with special educational needs is very good; they learn well across the full curriculum and into the sixth form. Extra activities are provided for higher attaining pupils. Pupils' work is regularly checked and marked according to departmental policies. Good use is made of homework.



## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Broad and balanced with well planned schemes of work. Extra-curricular activities are very good and a strength of the school.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good and a strength of the school. Attention is given to individual needs and pupils participate well in all school activities.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The very few pupils with English as an additional language have no language difficulties that require additional support.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. Opportunities for moral and social development are very good, and for cultural development they are good. Opportunities for spiritual development are satisfactory. The requirement for collective worship is not met.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school is caring; individual pupils are known well. Their progress is monitored systematically and targets are set to help them improve.

The curriculum is broad and balanced at Key Stages 3 and 4 and builds upon very good links with the primary schools. All pupils study two modern foreign languages. The school provides a good range of A/S and A level subjects as well as courses leading to vocational qualifications. Sixth form students are well supported and they appreciate the opportunities the school provides. Requirements of the National Curriculum are met, except for the provision of information and communications technology for all pupils at Key Stage 4. The very good range of extra-curricular activities extends pupils' experiences and contributes to many aspects of their personal development. A good programme of support and guidance, related to pupils' personal, careers and academic development, helps them to make very good progress in all aspects of school life.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. Leadership is purposeful and aims to provide a high quality education, and to help pupils make the most of the opportunities the school provides.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	They provide very good support to the school and fulfil most of their statutory responsibilities. They are effective in questioning and supporting the work of departments to which they are attached.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very Good. There is rigorous monitoring of the work of departments and pupils' progress.
The strategic use of resources	The school's development plan provides a clear framework for spending priorities. Excellent use is made of the school's resources. Non-teaching staff provide valuable support.

Leadership of the school is very effective and staff at all levels have a strong commitment to the school and its pupils. Rigorous monitoring of the school's work has brought about sustained improvement since the last inspection. The school is developing well as a self-evaluating organisation. It has a good grasp of its strengths and weaknesses and has the capacity to make further improvements. Financial planning is excellent. External grants and other resources are used efficiently and best value principles are applied to all spending. The accommodation is only just sufficient for the number of pupils and some teaching rooms are too small for the number of pupils they accommodate.



## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school expects pupils to work hard and achieve their best.</li> <li>• The progress their children are making.</li> <li>• The good management of the school.</li> <li>• The good teaching.</li> <li>• The approachability of the school.</li> <li>• The school is helping their children become mature and responsible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The information the school provides.</li> <li>• The closeness with which the school works with parents.</li> <li>• The amount of homework pupils are given.</li> </ul>

Parents are very supportive of the school and inspectors endorse parents' positive views. Some parents had mixed feelings about the closeness with which the school works with parents and the information the school provides. Inspectors found that the school strives hard to involve parents. Through annual reports the school provides parents with comprehensive information on the progress their children are making. However, there is inconsistency in the clarity with which the detail contained in some of the reports is summarised in order that parents can clearly grasp what their children know, understand and can do, and what they must do in order to improve. Homework is set regularly in most subjects and homework tasks are generally used to consolidate and extend pupils' learning.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

**Standards at the end of Year 9 and Year 11 are well above average. They are above average in the sixth form.**

1. Pupils achieve well and make good progress at Range High School. Since the last inspection overall results have been consistently well above the national average and well above average in comparison with similar schools. In National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Year 9, results are improving at the same rate as the national trend. National Curriculum tests taken in the last year of primary education, at the end of Year 6, show that pupils enter Range High School with standards of attainment that although wide ranging are, overall, above average.
2. The 2000 National Curriculum test results taken at the end of Year 9 in mathematics were well above average nationally and in the highest 5 per cent in comparison with similar schools. Results in English and science were well above average both in comparison with all schools and similar schools. Comparison of the 2000 test results with the test results of the same pupils taken at the end of Year 6, show that the standards achieved at the end of Year 9 represent good progress and achievement from the time pupils entered the school. Whilst boys and girls achieve similar standards in science and mathematics, girls tend to outperform boys in English. The 2000 teacher assessments show well above average attainment by the end of Year 9 in all other National Curriculum subjects.
3. GCSE results show sustained improvement since the time of the last inspection at a rate that is above the national trend. In the 2000 GCSE examinations, 79 per cent of pupils achieved five or more subjects at the higher A\*-C grades compared with the national average of 49 per cent, and 97 per cent of pupils achieved five or more A\* - G grades compared to 90 per cent nationally. The average GCSE points score per pupil, which is calculated on a scale giving eight points to an A\* grade to one point for a G grade, was well above average both in comparison with all and similar schools. These results represent at least satisfactory and for many pupils, good progress and achievement from the end of Year 9.
4. Almost all of the Year 11 pupils are entered for the GCSE examination and in most years all pupils entered are successful in achieving certificates. This reflects very well on the progress of pupils with special educational needs. Although the results of both boys and girls are above their respective national averages by similar amounts, consistent with the difference in performance observed nationally, girls regularly outperform boys in the GCSE examination. The school has been working hard to improve the standards of boys and the 2000 results show an improvement on the performance of boys in 1999. However, the difference between the performance of boys and girls remains about the same due to a comparable improvement in the performance of girls.
5. Results in the 2000 GCSE English, English Literature and mathematics examinations were well above the national averages and above those achieved in 1999. The school enters about ten times as many candidates for the GCSE examination in the separate science subjects of biology, chemistry and physics than schools nationally and in 1999, results in these subjects were above average. Although these results dropped to be below average in 2000, comparison of the average GCSE points scores of these pupils with the average points scores they achieved in the National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Year 9 in 1998, shows that these results represent satisfactory progress and achievement through Years 10 and 11. Results in double

award science were about average. Results in business studies, drama, French, geography, history, information and communications technology, physical education, religious education and design and technology were all well above average, while results in art and German were above average. Girls outperformed boys in all subjects other than geography.

6. The number of students in the sixth form has increased since the last inspection and this is reflected in the rising number of entries for the Advanced level General Certificate of Education. In 2000 these were about one-fifth higher than in previous years. Students make good progress across Years 12 and 13 and results in 2000, as in the last four years, were above the national average. Well above average results were achieved in biology, English literature, design and technology, geography and mathematics. The progress being made and standards achieved by the small number of students following General National Vocational Qualification courses are satisfactory.
7. In lessons and other work seen, standards at the end of Years 9 and 11 are well above national expectations in most subjects and by the end of Year 13 they are above expectations.
8. As a result of the National Literacy Strategy introduced in primary schools, pupils enter the school in Year 7 with a good basic knowledge of language. The English department is in close contact with the primary schools and this ensures good continuity in literacy development when pupils enter the school. Pupils' literacy skills develop well in Years 7 to 9, so that by the end of Year 9 standards of literacy are well above average and underpin the good progress that pupils are making. Oral skills are good from the start of Year 7: pupils are good listeners; they speak with confidence and express their viewpoints fluently. This was seen, for example, in a Year 8 English lesson where pupils listened carefully to a taped dialect conversation and then took part in a class discussion of the differences between accent, dialect and standard English with enthusiasm and confidence. They understand and use specialist vocabulary in, for example, mathematics, science and design and technology. In Years 10 and 11, pupils articulate their responses to questions clearly and use language precisely when speaking. For example, in a Year 10 media studies lesson, pupils showed increasing familiarity with the technical terms used in the media to convey feeling and meaning. In English, pupils show above average comprehension skills and offer good analysis and response to literature. Sixth form students draw on a variety of sources of evidence and use sophisticated vocabulary when discussing their work. This was seen, for example, in a Year 13 history lesson on the origins and growth of the 'SS' in Nazi Germany in the 1930s.
9. Reading and comprehension standards are well above average throughout the school. These enable pupils, including those with special educational needs, to meet all curricular demands. Through activities such as poetry days, a book week, use of the library and silent reading in English, the school provides a good deal of support for personal reading. Many pupils write fluently and attain well above average standards, producing some good creative pieces of writing in all years. Creative writing is well promoted and a wide range of writing skills is developed as pupils write for a range of purposes and audiences. The few pupils with English as an additional language are at an advanced stage of language development and able to study the full curriculum.
10. Work in the mathematics department lays the foundation for the development of pupils' number skills, which are above average. Pupils have very good mathematical data-handling skills and very good number and calculation skills. Their algebraic skills are strong and their understanding of shape and space is very good. Pupils are able to apply their mathematical skills in other subjects such as science, geography and

design and technology. There is at present no co-ordinated school numeracy policy and the mathematics department is keen to lead the development of such a policy in order that numeracy skills can be extended in a systematic way in all subjects. The regular practice of mental arithmetic skills in mathematics lessons helps pupils to work more efficiently when solving problems. In a Year 8 lesson, for example, higher attaining pupils applied simple strategies to quickly calculate different percentages of given quantities, while lower attaining pupils in a Year 7 lesson consolidated their skills of multiplication and factorisation.

11. Most pupils are competent users of calculators and information and communications technology. Higher attaining pupils use calculators efficiently to handle complex calculations. For example, in one Year 11 lesson pupils successfully coped with challenging work involving graphs and made effective use of a graphic calculator to demonstrate their answers on an overhead projector. In science pupils manipulate whole numbers and decimals for their scientific tasks, and make use of tables and graphs to present results. Pupils are also able to calculate results to a required degree of accuracy and understand estimation and errors. Numerical skills are also used effectively in geography where in a Year 11 lesson, for example, pupils made good use of graphs and statistics to compare the hours of sunshine in cities in Britain and Spain. In art and design and technology, pupils are able to measure accurately and make good judgements about the size and proportion of objects. In Years 10 and 11, pupils show a lively interest in their investigative work, analyse patterns and structures, and produce neat diagrams, which aid their thinking. Algebraic skills are strong and pupils' understanding of shape and space is good. Pupils in all years are keen to discuss methods and answers to problems in order to improve their work.
12. Well above average standards were observed in most subjects throughout the school. In geography, pupils demonstrate a good grasp of geographical concepts as illustrated in knowledgeable discussions on the factors affecting the use of land along the Rhine. Pupils demonstrate a good grasp of historical knowledge and can interpret events together with their causes and effects, for example, when discussing the relationship between the monarch and the people during the reign of Elizabeth I. In modern foreign languages most pupils achieve above average standards. Oral skills are good and pupils are able to answer questions in the foreign language. Pupils do well in project work and coursework and this is exemplified in their portfolios for art and their project folders in design and technology. High standards are achieved in the wide range of extra-curricular activities the school offers. These include musical ensembles, drama productions and a variety of individual and team sports. About 90 per cent of students progress from the sixth form into higher education.

### **Good teaching with high expectations succeeds in motivating pupils.**

13. Teachers make a substantial contribution to the success of pupils. Their efforts since the last inspection to further improve the quality of teaching and learning have been successful. Teaching and learning is good in all key stages. It was good or better in 87 per cent of lessons seen. In these lessons varied and challenging teaching captured pupils' interest and stimulated thoughtful responses. In the 25 per cent of very good or excellent lessons, teaching was imaginative, well paced, lively and productive, enabling pupils to quickly gain new knowledge, understanding and to acquire appropriate skills. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Consistently good and very good teaching in English, mathematics and science has a marked effect on pupils' attainment and progress.
14. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, which underpins confident teaching. This, together with high expectations and good control and management skills, helps to create purposeful learning atmospheres in lessons. Pupils respond well to this

learning environment and relationships are very good. These provide pupils with the confidence to contribute to lesson activities. This was well illustrated in a Year 7 drama lesson, for example, where the supportive audience provided by the remainder of the class enhanced the quality of role-play performance. Lessons are very well planned to build systematically on pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. In religious education in Year 8, for example, pupils' knowledge of the parable of the Good Samaritan was developed effectively into a consideration of the issues of prejudice and discrimination in everyday life. Pupils, at all levels of attainment, are well challenged and this promotes interest and enthusiasm. In Years 10 and 11, pupils develop into active and mature learners who are able to work on their own initiative. For example, in a Year 10 modern languages lesson, pupils had already developed into committed dual linguists, able to hold quite fluent conversations in French.

15. Teachers generally involve pupils skilfully in setting personal learning targets, which helps them to progress well and raises their confidence. Boys, for example, benefit from the alternate boy-girl seating arrangement adopted in most lessons. There was a noticeable difference in the willingness of boys to participate in class discussion in a Year 11 religious education lesson where it was not possible to have such a seating arrangement because the boys heavily outnumbered the girls. Questioning is skilfully used to consolidate and extend pupils' learning and teachers ensure that all pupils take part in question and answer sessions so that discussion is not dominated by a few. This is seen in social and personal education where teacher-led discussions are skilfully managed to engage all pupils. In a Year 10 lesson on some of the ethical issues related to consumerism, pupils were able to express their views clearly and listened intently to the views of others. Skilful questioning to probe and develop students' understanding is a feature of much of the teaching in the sixth form. Often this leads to mature and well-informed discussion, as in a Year 13 English lesson where scenes from 'A Dolls House' were being analysed. In German and French a lively teaching manner successfully communicates the enjoyment of using a foreign language. In history pupils learn well because teachers ask well-focused questions to emphasise main points and draw on their subject knowledge to give clear explanations and extend pupils' learning. Such well structured questioning was observed, for example, in a Year 7 lesson on the murder of Thomas Becket. Learning is less effective in the few lessons where lengthy teacher-led activities required pupils to listen for extended periods as, for example, in a Year 13 psychology lesson.
16. Teachers build well on the interests of pupils who respond very well on projects and longer pieces of coursework. Art portfolios and project work in geography and design and technology, for example, are very well researched and of a good standard. Good technician support, where provides, facilitates the effective use of resources and lessons are usually conducted at a brisk pace to achieve objectives. In a Year 11 geography lesson, for example, effective use was made of video tape recordings, overhead transparencies and worksheets in a carefully planned way to illustrate different patterns of land use and to consolidate pupils' learning. The overhead projector was used very effectively in a Year 13 history lesson to identify and summarise key learning points. In information and communications technology, effective use of CD-ROMs and Internet facilities gives access to a wide range of good quality information. However, the use of information and communications technology in science and design and technology is inhibited by a lack of resources, and lack of development in the area of control.
17. Teachers generally take good account of the different levels at which pupils are working and this is facilitated by the allocation of pupils to teaching groups according to levels of attainment. The valuable support available from learning support assistants and volunteer sixth form students also enables teachers to give greater attention to the individual needs of pupils. Sixth form students, for example, made a

significant contribution to pupils' learning in a Year 11 mathematics lesson in which standards of attainment were well above average. Targets are regularly set by teachers to help individual pupils understand how to improve in most subjects. Pupils' work is regularly checked, with marks given according to departmental marking schemes. However, these marking schemes do not always provide clear information on the standard of pupils' work in terms of National Curriculum levels and GCSE grades. The school is aware of this and is in the process of developing a school marking policy.

18. Homework is usually used effectively to consolidate and extend learning. In English, mathematics, science, history and geography, homework tasks are set which require the use of research skills. Homework is usually relevant and constructive in preparing pupils for the following lessons. However, there are a few occasions when pupils are requested to complete for homework the topics on which they have been working in class, which means that those who have made less progress in the lesson sometimes have a higher workload than their quicker peers.

**Pupils' attitudes are excellent: they contribute well to their own learning and the life of the school.**

19. The school provides a supportive and respectful working environment for all pupils and learning takes place in a calm and orderly atmosphere. Both pupils and parents are proud of Range High School. Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent and these make a significant contribution to the general life of the school. They are keen to do well and concentrate on the tasks set. They listen attentively and assimilate new information and ideas quickly. Pupils are keen to help each other in lessons and are considerate towards those with disabilities. They work well in pairs and groups, collaborating effectively and responding well when given the opportunity to show initiative. Pupils' willingness to work co-operatively was clearly seen in a Year 8 information and communications technology lesson where, due to an electrical fault, half of the computers could not be used. Although they were working in very cramped conditions they worked sensibly in pairs and showed consideration for those around them with the result that good progress was made in the lesson. The school atmosphere is enhanced by the numerous displays of high quality pupils' work in corridors and classrooms. Pupils show respect for these displays, which remain untouched even though many are located on quite narrow corridors. There is no evidence of graffiti on any of the school buildings and public areas remain relatively litter free after breaks. Sixth form students are keen and enthusiastic about



their work and their mature and responsible behaviour adds considerably to the general atmosphere of the school. Pupils use the art, music and computer rooms, workshops and laboratories very responsibly and are very conscious of safety needs when engaged in practical activities.

20. The excellent attitudes of pupils can also be seen in the way in which they respond to the school's high expectations of behaviour. These are clearly understood and behaviour is very good. Pupils are courteous, very helpful to visitors and show respect to each other and to their teachers. The school is an orderly community and conduct around the school is very good at lesson changeover times. Pupils queue patiently when waiting to enter the dining hall and make their way to and from assemblies in a composed manner. This is particularly important when large numbers of pupils leave the performing arts theatre at the end of morning assembly and movement in the corridor outside can come to a virtual standstill. The sensible behaviour of pupils, together with the vigilance of teachers, helps to ensure safety at these times. Pupils respond well to the efforts made to support those with behaviour difficulties. Incidents of unacceptable behaviour, although rare, are dealt with effectively by staff. In the last year there were very few fixed-period exclusions and no permanent exclusions.
21. The personal and social development of pupils is nurtured in a careful manner. The social and personal education programme provides opportunities for pupils to explore and discuss pertinent issues and make informed decisions. It does much to develop pupils' attitudes towards social and environmental issues. The programme includes sex education and drug and alcohol misuse and covers topics such as bullying. Pupils interviewed during the week of the inspection reported that there were very few incidents of bullying and that the school had dealt with any incidents effectively. They were confident that any future incidents would also be dealt with effectively. Attendance is above average with little unauthorised absence. Pupils are punctual at the start of morning and afternoon school and the majority of lessons start on time.

**Very effective leadership is promoting very good standards and good teamwork.**

22. The overall leadership and management of the school are very good. The head and senior management team provide a clear educational direction for the school. The school has a strong positive atmosphere and provides a well-ordered learning environment in which there is a strong commitment to improving the quality of education. School development planning and self-evaluation are very good and having a clear impact on the rising standards in the school. This is evident in pupils' excellent attitudes and attainment, behaviour, personal development and relationships, all of which are very good. School development planning reflects the school aims, identifies relevant priorities and covers both medium and long-term goals. Plans are costed effectively and have clearly defined targets, success criteria, staff responsibilities and timescales. All school plans serve as working documents and are directly linked to action to improve the quality of education the school provides. The school is very well placed to continue its improvement.
23. The school's commitment to improvement is underpinned by the rigour with which the school monitors and evaluates pupils' progress and attainment. At the time of the last inspection, more consistent procedures for the assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress were required. Rigorous systems have been developed which enable the school to closely monitor pupils' achievement and progress and provide additional support or challenge as necessary. The senior management team carries out detailed reviews of pupils' performance in national tests and examinations. These reviews include written reports and interviews with heads of department and challenging targets are set for test and examination results.

24. Advice has been sought from the Local Education Authority to help focus on specific aspects of teaching and learning. One recent example of the effective use of such advice has been in the development of strategies to improve the performance of boys. Although these initiatives are having positive effects, as evidenced by the improving standards in the GCSE examination, the gap between the boys and girls remains, due to the improving performance of girls. The overall quality of management provided by heads of department is very good and the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning within departments is having a direct effect on the raising of standards. However, the school is at an early stage in the development of a strategy for the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning in a way that would support the systematic identification and sharing of good practice across departments. Support for teachers, including student teachers and those new to the school, is very good. A strong sense of teamwork is evident in most departments and this is having a positive effect on raising standards, and in particular on the achievement of pupils with special educational needs.
25. Governors have high expectations and are conscientious in carrying out their responsibilities. They have a good sense of best value, reflected in their approach to financial management and planning. Statutory requirements are met, except that for a daily act of collective worship, and the provision of information and communications technology in Years 10 and 11. Governors take a keen interest in the work of the school and provide the school with a substantial amount of specialist help and advice. Positive relationships exist between the governing body and the senior management team. Through regular detailed reports from the head and other senior members of staff, and links to subject departments, Governors have a good awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governors are committed to helping the school to do its best for pupils and the local community.
26. The school was commended by HMCI following the last inspection and has made very good progress in tackling the issues identified at that time. The quality of teaching has improved and no unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection. The assessment and monitoring systems now allow the school to maintain continuous oversight of pupils' actual and expected performance. The length of the teaching week has been extended since the last inspection. However, it is 30 minutes below the 25 hours suggested for Years 10 and 11 and the amount of time allocated for science in these years is barely sufficient to cover the three separate sciences in appropriate depth. Strenuous efforts have been made to improve the accommodation since the last inspection, and the accommodation for science is about to be improved with the building of two new science laboratories. However, the accommodation for art and music, and the indoor accommodation for physical education, remains inadequate. The overall very good leadership and management of the school is making a significant contribution to the standards being achieved and the quality of education the school provides.

**The school makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs and there is an effective inclusion programme to which all staff are committed.**

27. Range High School provides very well for pupils with special educational needs. The proportion of pupils with special educational need is below the national average while the proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need is above the national average. The school is Sefton's only secondary school designated for physically disabled pupils, particularly those with mobility problems, and while most of the pupils on the school's register of special educational need have moderate learning difficulties, 19 pupils of the pupils on the register have physical disabilities. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in the school community and relationships are very good. They participate equally in the life of the school, including the sixth form.
28. Provision for special educational needs is well organised. Through very good liaison with the primary schools, the school has a good knowledge of pupils' needs before they enter the school in Year 7. Pupils' individual education plans show that the support pupils receive matches need. Learning support assistants are well deployed and provide effective support in lessons. This makes an important contribution to pupils' achievement, which is consistently very good in relation to the targets contained in pupils' individual educational plans. All staff are aware of these pupils and the targets in their individual education plans and this is an important factor in the very good progress that these pupils are making towards their specific targets. Most of pupils with special educational needs make very good progress both in their lessons and over time. By the end of Year 11, almost all pupils on the special educational needs register achieve five or more A\*-G grades in the GCSE examination and some achieve five or more A\*-C grades. These results represent very good levels of achievement by these pupils.
29. Pupils with special educational needs are able to study the full curriculum in each of the key stages and participate fully in the wide range of extra-curricular activities the school offers. Each department has a teacher with responsibility for special educational needs who links with the co-ordinator to ensure that departments are kept fully informed on all matters relating to the needs of individual pupils. Good support is provided for pupils with behavioural difficulties through in-class support and short-term individual tuition. Visiting specialists give extra help when needed. Each subject maintains oversight of the needs of higher attaining pupils. Through activities such as the philosophy club, extra voluntary lessons, the 'Young Analyst of the Year Competition' and the 'Biology Olympiad' higher attaining pupils are provided with opportunities to work together.
30. The management and co-ordination of special educational needs provision is very good. Appropriate policy documents provide effective frameworks for learning and behavioural support. The arrangements for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress across all subjects are very good and provide those immediately concerned with the teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs with accurate information on the progress they are making. Communication between the governors, headteacher, senior management team and special educational needs co-ordinator is very good and all are kept well informed on special educational needs matters. The school values close partnership with parents and parents are fully involved in the annual reviews. The funding received by the school for special educational needs is fully used for the purposes intended. Provision for special educational needs is a strength of the school.

**Pupils' learning and interest in school is enhanced by a very good range of extra-curricular activities from which many pupils benefit.**

31. The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities in which a large number of pupils participate. This is a strength of the school and recognised as such by parents at the pre-inspection meeting, although 14 per cent of parents who responded to the questionnaire disagreed. Pupils are provided with numerous opportunities for social development through community work and work placements in addition to the very good range of extra-curricular activities. These activities not only considerably enrich the curriculum, but also extend the range of pupils' cultural experiences and opportunities to achieve. They considerably support pupils' learning and provide pupils with a wider range of interests. Pupils respond well to these opportunities and standards are high.
32. Visual and performance arts are considerable strengths of the school and the school strives to develop in pupils an appreciation of their own cultural traditions in many subjects of the curriculum, most obviously through English literature, drama, music, art, history and geography. This work is well supported by theatre and cinema visits, school productions and drama workshops, the Arts Festival, geography and history field trips and numerous educational visits to places of diverse cultural and historical interest such as museums, the London Planetarium, Chester Zoo and the Catalyst Museum. Pupils also learn about other European cultures and this work is well supported by work in modern foreign languages and exchange visits with schools in France and Germany. Pupils also benefit from video conferencing links with College Notre Dame, which is the exchange school in Brittany. Outdoor and residential activities feature strongly in the school's provision and make a very good contribution to pupils' social development. The Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, for example, has a particular emphasis in the school. It involves over 130 pupils and over 20 staff and expeditions take place most weekends from April to October.
33. Sport is a particular strength of the school and a high proportion of pupils take part in some form of extra-curricular sporting activity. The quality of this provision has been recognised by the Sportsmark Award. There is a very good range of inter-house competitions and school teams compete against other schools with a good level of success. Individual pupils achieve representative honours at district, county and sometimes national levels. Musical activities include the school orchestra together with a number of other instrumental groups, the choir and musical productions. There are also numerous subject-based clubs that support pupils' learning and personal development.
34. Extra-curricular activities also provide pupils with many opportunities to develop self-confidence and to show initiative. These opportunities include service on the school council and participation in a variety of charitable activities organised through houses, such as the sponsorship of a child in a Third World country and support for UNICEF day. Careers and work-related education, is very good and benefits from the school's well-established links with careers advisers, local colleges, training providers and employers. With support from careers teachers and tutors, pupils are expected to play a major role in finding their own work placements. This helps to improve pupils' communication skills and makes a good contribution to their social development.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED?**

### **Provision for information and communications technology in Years 10 and 11.**

35. The facilities for information and communications technology have been much improved since the last inspection. There has been a major investment in information and communications technology resources since the last inspection and accommodation has been improved with the development of two new computer rooms. New staff have been appointed and the school is now well placed to ensure that information and communications technology is fully integrated and pupils' skills developed in all subjects. The amount of teaching time for discrete information and communications technology lessons in Years 7 to 9 has been increased, and plans for all pupils in Year 7 to obtain a certificate by the end of Year 9 are well in hand. Pupils presently in Year 7 will have the benefit of the new arrangement, but not those in Years 8 and 9. Provision for these pupils, as well as those in Years 10 and 11, has not taken account of this. Subject departments contribute to the development of information and communications technology skills in Years 10 and 11 and there are good examples in geography, business studies, textiles, German, history, English and mathematics. However, ways of ensuring that all pupils have a coherent programme of information and communications technology in Years 10 and 11 are in an early stage of development and the school cannot at present state with confidence that all pupils in these years receive their full National Curriculum entitlement. Also, a shortage of information and communications technology resources in design and technology and science make it difficult for National Curriculum requirements, with regard to the strands of control, to be met in these subjects.

### **The accommodation for art, music and physical education.**

36. At the time of the last inspection the accommodation was described as barely adequate for the numbers of pupils in the school and in some instances, detrimental to the quality of learning. Since that time the number of pupils on roll has increased but the accommodation remains largely the same. Accommodation for science is about to be improved with the building of two new science laboratories. This will reduce the amount of science teaching that has to take place outside laboratories. However, some teaching rooms remain too small for the size of teaching groups allocated and this restricts the range of activities that can take place. The specialist art and music rooms are inadequate and offer unsatisfactory accommodation for teaching and learning in these subjects. Although aspects of the accommodation for physical education, such as the tennis courts and sports hall, provide very good accommodation the lack of a gymnasium restricts coverage of the National Curriculum programmes of study.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

37. To further raise the standards of work and attainment of pupils, the governors, headteacher, senior management team and staff should now:

- Ensure that all pupils receive their full curriculum entitlement to information and communications technology in Years 10 and 11.  
*(paragraphs: 16, 35)*
- Provide sufficient information and communications technology resources in science and design and technology to ensure full coverage of the National Curriculum.  
*(paragraphs: 16, 35)*
- Continue to press the case for improvements to the accommodation and, in particular, the provision of adequate teaching space for art and music, and for an area suitable for gymnastics work physical education.  
*(paragraphs: 26, 36)*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	80
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	31

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	24	62	13	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
	Number of pupils on the school's roll	997
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	25	0

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
	Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	39
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	118	1

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	15

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.5
National comparative data	7.9

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	1.1

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	117	94	211

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	106	107	101
	Girls	94	91	81
	Total	200	198	182
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	95 (84)	94 (90)	86 (85)
	National	63 (63)	62 (62)	55 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	64 (48)	77 (71)	58 (44)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	107	109	104
	Girls	93	90	85
	Total	200	199	189
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	95 (87)	94 (92)	90 (88)
	National	63 (64)	65 (64)	59 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	66 (55)	72 (65)	49 (53)
	National	31 (31)	39 (37)	29 (28)

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



### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	99	93	192

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	72	97	99
	Girls	79	89	90
	Total	151	186	189
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	79 (71)	97 (98)	98 (98)
	National	49 (47)	90 (91)	94 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	52.3 (52.3)
	National	38 (38)

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

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

### Attainment at the end of the sixth form

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A-level or AS-level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	77	98	176

Average A/AS points score per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A-levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	16.4	19.7	18.1	0	1.8	1.8
National	16.9	17.7	17.4 (17.9)	2.5	2.8	2.6 (2.8)

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

Vocational qualifications	Number	% success rate
Number in their final year of studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	3
	National	82.5

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	4
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	5
White	1166
Any other minority ethnic group	1175

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	11	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	70.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.7

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Education support staff: Y7 – Y13**

Total number of education support staff	33
Total aggregate hours worked per week	877

#### **Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13**

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	76.2
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#### **Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y13**

Key Stage 3	25.8
Key Stage 4	21.6

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	3,039,168
Total expenditure	3,031,320
Expenditure per pupil	2,518
Balance brought forward from previous year	68,894
Balance carried forward to next year	76,742

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1175
Number of questionnaires returned	298

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	32	55	9	4	0
My child is making good progress in school.	38	55	3	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	24	60	6	1	9
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25	57	13	5	0
The teaching is good.	31	60	4	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	20	46	24	6	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	48	42	4	2	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	38	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	18	52	19	4	6
The school is well led and managed.	45	47	2	2	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	35	55	4	1	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	29	45	11	3	12

### Other issues raised by parents

Written comments were included with 33 (11%) of the questionnaires returned. Parents expressed strong support for the school and commented favourably on the commitment of teachers and the positive atmosphere in the school. They particularly praised the support given when their children transfer from their primary schools. A small number of parents' comments related to the setting of homework, the arrangements made for parents' consultative evenings and accommodation.