

INSPECTION REPORT

HENRY COMPTON SCHOOL

Fulham

LEA area: Hammersmith and Fulham

Unique reference number: 100358

Headteacher: Mr John Hayes

Reporting inspector: Mr Martin Beale
19385

Dates of inspection: 12 - 15 February 2001

Inspection number: 230022

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:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	11 to 16
Gender of pupils:	Boys
School address:	Kingwood Road Fulham London
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Miss Joan Christmas
Date of previous inspection:	25 March 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
19385	Martin Beale	Registered inspector		<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>How high are standards?</p> <p>a) The schools results and achievements</p> <p>How well are pupils or students taught?</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p>
9275	Candy Kalms	Lay inspector		<p>How high are standards?</p> <p>b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development</p> <p>How well does the school care for its pupils?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
1050	Ronald Wallace	Team inspector	Special educational needs	
2919	Phillip Armitage	Team inspector	Mathematics	
31804	Lyn Bithell	Team inspector	English	
23550	Marie Blewitt	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
4696	John Bowden	Team inspector	Art	
17530	Mary Cureton	Team inspector	English as an additional language	
23324	Sylvia Greenland	Team inspector	Geography History	
13805	Lynn Lowery	Team inspector	Design and technology	
8052	Kenneth McKenzie	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
23308	John Morrell	Team inspector	Music	
25748	Roger Moyle	Team inspector	Physical education	
4126	Clive Parsons	Team inspector	Science Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils or students?
30563	Jacqueline Pentlow	Team inspector	Religious education	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Henry Compton School is a much smaller than average comprehensive school for boys from 11 to 16 years of age. A high proportion (over 60 per cent) of the 487 pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and there are 33 refugee and 14 Traveller children. Almost half of the pupils have English as an additional language and 18 are at the early stages of English language acquisition. A considerable number of pupils join and leave other than at the start of the school year. Pupils also regularly enter the school having just arrived in this country for a variety of reasons, often speaking little or no English. The proportion identified as having special educational needs, including those with statements is above average. Almost two-thirds of the pupils are eligible for free school meals. Attainment on entry of the current Year 7, although higher than in previous years, is well below the national average, and is weaker in English and mathematics than in science. The inspection of this school included a detailed inspection of its provision for pupils with special educational needs.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is striving with considerable success to meet the complex needs of the diverse community it serves. The strong leadership of the headteacher, effectively supported by other senior managers and governors, has brought much improvement and, although costs are high, the school provides satisfactory value for money. Staff work hard to ensure that all pupils can participate in all that the school offers and make good progress. Teaching is good overall, resulting in the pupils making good progress. GCSE results improved considerably in 2000 and, although still well below average, were well above results in similar schools. National Curriculum test results have not seen the same improvement and remain low, although standards are rising at Key Stage 3 as a consequence of good teaching and the higher attainment of the pupils on entry to the school. Attendance is low and the punctuality of some pupils is poor.

What the school does well

- Good teaching is enabling many pupils to make good progress.
- The strong leadership of the headteacher and other senior managers, supported by systematic processes for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school, is resulting in improved standards and the increasing popularity of the school.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good, enabling many pupils to make substantial progress.
- Very good provision is made for the pupils' moral and social development.
- Good care is taken of pupils and staff are well informed about their progress and their personal development.
- Staff strive successfully to ensure that all pupils, whatever their family and language background, can benefit from the educational and other opportunities provided.
- Strong relationships built on mutual respect and trust help to generate a harmonious atmosphere.

What could be improved

- Standards of work in English, mathematics and science and National Curriculum test results for 14-year-olds need to be improved.
- Attendance is well below average and some pupils are regularly late for school.
- Inconsistent use is made of computers to support the pupils' learning in several subjects.

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 judged by the previous inspection in 1996 to be failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education. When it was re-inspected two years later, improvements had been made but serious weaknesses remained. Good progress has been made since then and the school has improved considerably. The vigorous action taken by the headteacher, senior staff and governors has successfully brought about improvements in teaching, which have resulted in rising standards. The behaviour of the pupils is much better. In spite of thorough processes to monitor and reduce absence, both attendance and punctuality remain stubbornly low. Pupil numbers reached a low point in 1998, but have increased since and the number of applications for September 2001 is high, reflecting the increasingly positive perception of the school in the local community. The school is now well placed to continue the improvements made and to raise standards further.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 16-year-olds based on GCSE examination results.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
GCSE examinations	E	E	E	A

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

National Curriculum test results for 14-year-olds in English, mathematics and science improved in 2000 but were still very low, putting the school in the bottom five per cent of schools. Science results were below, while those in English and mathematics were well below, results in similar schools. In spite of the improvements in 2000, the trend since the last inspection has been downward. This needs to be set against the very low attainment of the pupils on entry to the school and the very high movement of pupils in and out of the school. GCSE results improved considerably in 2000, exceeding the challenging targets set. Results are much higher than at the time of the last inspection. The proportion of pupils gaining at least five grades A*-C doubled and, although overall results were well below average, they were well above results in similar schools. English, mathematics and science results were all below average, but again well above the average of similar schools. This represented good progress for most pupils from their Year 9 test results two years earlier. Further challenging, but achievable, targets have been set for the future.

Standards are improving at Key Stage 3 and the work seen during the inspection was of a higher standard than the recent test results. In Years 7 and 8 more pupils than previously are achieving average or above-average standards; however, attainment in Year 9 is still well below what is expected for the age group. Most pupils are achieving well and making good progress throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs are making very good progress. Those at early stages of English language acquisition make good progress in small groups and are able to take their place in mainstream classes quickly. More advanced bilingual learners are often able to make the same good progress as others in their classes, although some still struggle when they have limited support.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Most pupils enjoy school, are keen to learn and mostly listen attentively to their teachers.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Generally good. Although exclusions are high, they have fallen dramatically in the last four years.
Personal development and relationships	Good relationships have a positive effect upon the learning of pupils. Pupils from a variety of different cultures mix well together and respect different values and beliefs. They take the responsibilities given to them seriously.
Attendance	Despite some improvements since the last inspection, attendance is poor. Many pupils arrive late, some frequently.

Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning have improved considerably. As a consequence the school is a harmonious environment in which pupils can concentrate, feel secure and learn. The procedures for improving attendance and punctuality have been given a high priority but have had much less impact.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 11-14 years	aged 14-16 years
Lessons seen overall	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 is good overall. This is a considerable improvement since the previous inspection and is a consequence of the vigorous action taken to eliminate unsatisfactory teaching and to raise teachers' expectations. Teaching is satisfactory or better in almost 97 per cent of lessons and is very good or excellent in over a quarter. As a result of this pupils learn quickly and make good progress, particularly in Years 10 and 11. The majority of pupils are keen; they concentrate and they put much effort into their work. Many teachers know their subjects well and consistently teach lessons that are good or better. Lessons are planned very carefully to meet the needs of all pupils. They also build the pupils' knowledge systematically in small, yet challenging, steps. Many teachers extend the language skills of the pupils, particularly through the careful way in which they use targeted questions. English teaching is good and science teaching is satisfactory throughout the school. The teaching of mathematics is satisfactory at Key Stage 3 and good at Key Stage 4. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs, whether in class or in withdrawal groups, is good, as is the teaching of pupils with English as an additional language. In some subjects, however, the grouping of pupils is unsatisfactory when those with English as an additional language are taught alongside those with special educational needs. Traveller children are also given good support. The only shortcomings in a small number of lessons were: insufficient control of some pupils; teachers talking for too long so that pupils became bored or for too little time so that important points were not explained well. Good teaching to remedy identified weaknesses in the pupils' literacy and numeracy, has resulted in considerable improvements in both.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. Supports well the school's aims of meeting the individual needs of its pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good assessment of the pupils' needs, good planning and target-setting and effective strategies for improving literacy are resulting in very good progress for pupils with special educational needs.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good for pupils at early stages of learning English, but there is insufficient support for those at higher stages.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good provision is made for the pupils' personal development. The promotion of their moral and social development is very good. Good provision is made for their cultural development and their spiritual development receives satisfactory attention.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupils are well cared for. The information staff gain by monitoring pupils' progress in lessons and their personal development is used well to provide appropriate support.

All National Curriculum requirements are being met, but computers are not used systematically to support and extend pupils' learning. The school has established a satisfactory partnership with parents although there remains scope for a closer relationship with some ethnic groups. Specific strategies such as those to extend pupils with particular talents, the support provided for Traveller children, the mentoring of individual pupils and their families, and the support for pupils identified as at risk of permanent exclusion are increasingly effective.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school benefits considerably from the strong leadership and clarity of vision of the headteacher. Other senior and middle managers have responded well to the drive to improve the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are becoming increasingly effective and are fulfilling their responsibilities satisfactorily.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The systematic analysis of assessment data and regular observations of teaching have helped to raise expectations and standards.
The strategic use of resources	Funding has been used very effectively to attract and retain good teachers, to support the learning of all pupils and to improve the fabric of the school.

There are enough teachers to cover the curriculum. The accommodation is generally good and should improve with the new building programme, but there are shortcomings in physical education. There are sufficient textbooks but learning resources are unsatisfactory overall: there are not enough computers and too few books in the library. The school seeks to get the best value whenever buying goods and services.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children are expected to work hard. • Teaching is good and staff have high expectations of the pupils. • Their children are making good progress. • Their children like school. • The school is well led and managed. • Their children are developing a sense of responsibility. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour. • Extra-curricular activities. • The quantity and consistency of homework. • Information about their children's progress.

The inspection team supports the positive views expressed by parents and finds that some, but not all, of their concerns are justified. Homework, for example, is set in most subjects and support is provided through regular homework clubs; however, not all pupils conscientiously complete it on time. The range of extra-curricular activities is good, as is the behaviour of most pupils. More could be done to make information more accessible to parents of all pupils through improving translation services and strengthening the links with some of the communities represented in the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Overall National Curriculum test results for 14-year-olds in 2000 and those in each of the core subjects were very low, putting the school in the bottom five per cent of schools nationally. This was an improvement from 1999, which had been a low point following a steady decline in the previous years. When compared with similar schools, overall results in 2000 and those in science were below average, while those in English and mathematics were well below average. About two-thirds of the pupils failed to reach standards expected nationally in mathematics and science in 2000, and over three-quarters in English. A high proportion of the pupils - 40 per cent in English and 30 per cent in mathematics and science - failed to achieve at 14 years of age the standard expected of them at 11. In spite of the improvement in 2000 the trend in the school's results has been downward since 1996, while results nationally have improved in the same period.
2. Several factors have contributed to low standards at Key Stage 3 in recent years. Of greatest significance is that the attainment of pupils on entry to the school has been consistently low, although it is now improving. Few pupils in the most recent year groups to have taken National Curriculum tests had joined the school with standards expected for their age in English, mathematics and science and many were well below this level. There has also been a very high rate of pupil mobility to the extent that only one-third of pupils in each of the last two Year 9 groups started in the school at the beginning of Year 7. Many of those who have joined the school other than at the start of Year 7 are at an early stage of English language acquisition, which slows the progress that they make. Standards are now rising in Key Stage 3; the work seen during the inspection reflects this. As the school becomes more popular (Year 7 for September 2001 is potentially oversubscribed) the attainment of pupils on entry is rising and pupil movement into and out of the school is reducing. Results in Key Stage 3 tests still remain a concern. The improvements in standards, particularly in Years 7 and 8, now need to be turned into better test results at the end of Year 9.
3. GCSE results improved considerably in 2000. The percentage of pupils gaining at least five grades A*-C doubled from 1999, and was more than four times the results at the time of the last inspection. Overall results were well below the national average but well above the average of similar schools. Results in English language, mathematics and science were all below average but well above the average of similar schools. Design and technology and English literature results were particularly good, being above the national average, while those in geography and history were low. The results of individual pupils in geography were particularly weak and in most cases were below the average which the same pupils achieved in their other subjects. Many of the factors influencing standards at Key Stage 3 also contribute to the results achieved at GCSE. These results therefore represent good progress for most pupils from their National Curriculum test results two years earlier. The challenging targets set were exceeded in 2000 and have been increased for 2001, even though the current Year 11 is judged by the school to have started from a lower base.
4. In spite of the improvements taking place throughout the school, in only about a third of lessons are pupils working at the level expected for their age. Only in a very few lessons, usually in top sets, are they working above this level. While standards are therefore still below average, many pupils are achieving well and making good progress. This is generally as a result of the high quality of much of the teaching, but also because of the pupils' willingness to learn and the effort that most put into their work. Standards are highest in Years 7 and 8 and pupils are also being prepared well at Key Stage 4 for GCSE, where many pupils make very good progress. Standards are highest in subjects that do not require significant writing, such as art, design and technology, physical education and music. The work seen in these subjects was average overall. Standards are lower in those subjects that require secure language skills such as English, geography, history and religious education where overall attainment is well below average.
5. Vigorous action is being taken to tackle the weak standards of literacy and numeracy of many pupils when they enter the school. Co-ordinated programmes involving teachers in all subjects, in addition to special groups for those with the weakest language skills, are beginning to bear fruit, with standards in these key skills improving. Many teachers take every opportunity to develop

speaking skills by targeting questions and patiently encouraging answers. This is enabling speaking to develop well at Key Stage 3 and satisfactorily at Key Stage 4. Most pupils try hard to respond, using full sentences and a reasonable range of vocabulary. Reading also develops well and many pupils are able to quote from the texts that they read to support their ideas. Technical writing skills are weak; not enough attention is paid to drafting and redrafting. Number skills are weak among most of the pupils, but are improving through the attention their development receives in mathematics lessons and in other subjects. This in turn is having a beneficial impact on standards in mathematics.

6. All pupils now benefit from being taught information and communication (ICT) skills and are mostly making good progress in these lessons. One shortcoming, however, is that they do not have enough opportunities to develop these skills through their application in other subjects. Furthermore, there is insufficient use of computers to support learning in other subjects. This is in part as a result of a shortage of modern computers but is also because subject planning does not specify where they should be used.
7. Pupils at an early stage of learning English make good progress, as a result of the intensive language teaching they receive in a small group. Many are able to take their place in mainstream classes quickly, although they receive less support there. Those at later stages of English language acquisition therefore make only satisfactory progress. Several pupils with English as an additional language are among the highest attaining in the school. They achieve good standards once they have acquired sufficient proficiency in English to gain full benefit from the curriculum.
8. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress. Mainstream classes are mostly well conducted in an orderly atmosphere, so that pupils with special educational needs are able to concentrate well. The methods used by the class teachers mostly enable these pupils to participate, and their in-class support teachers to ensure effective learning.
9. A number of pupils who are judged to be gifted have been identified by the school and individual programmes established to support their progress. These provide good challenge and extension. There are clear indications that these pupils are already gaining much benefit from this support, which has been provided relatively recently.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. The pupils' attitudes to learning, their behaviour and the quality of relationships have improved since the last inspection. The one weakness that remains is the poor attendance of some pupils. The majority of pupils are interested and involved in their lessons. They show a high level of motivation and in most lessons listen attentively to their teachers. There are, however, some occasions when pupils are less interested and become talkative and noisy. Many are proud of their achievements and gain considerable satisfaction from their efforts. Pupils ask and answer questions, take part in discussions and contribute well. For example, pupils in a Year 8 history lesson showed considerable interest in their study of the English Civil War by asking relevant questions that increased their understanding. Pupils in a Year 11 English lesson confidently put forward their ideas when discussing aspects of *Educating Rita*. The pupils whose special educational needs are related to weak literacy have good attitudes. Whilst sometimes needing reminders about the need to concentrate, they are generally very keen to make progress and can see that the approaches adopted by the school are enabling them to improve.
11. The behaviour of pupils throughout the school is good. This is a major improvement since the poor standards noted in the last inspection report. This good behaviour has had a positive impact on the pupils' standards of work, the quality of learning and the atmosphere in the school. Behaviour in most lessons during the inspection was good. On occasions it was exemplary. Most pupils respond to the school's high expectations of good behaviour. Inappropriate behaviour seldom interrupted lessons. Although during the inspection most pupils behaved very well, showing respect for both their teachers and for each other, it was clear from the school's records that incidents of unsatisfactory behaviour occur both in lessons and around the school. Exclusions have reduced significantly since the previous inspection, although the 64 fixed-term and six permanent exclusions last year were still high. This represents the difficulties several pupils have in conforming to the school's high expectations of behaviour. Although fixed-term exclusions increased last year there has been a reduction this year. The school uses exclusion only when it is absolutely necessary and works hard, involving parents wherever possible, to prevent it recurring.

12. Relationships and personal development are good. Staff are respected and pupils are confident that there is someone with whom they can share concerns and do not hesitate to approach that person for guidance. The pupils relate well to each other. There are harmonious relationships between pupils from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Pupils work together, encouraging and supporting each other, for example, in a Year 11 football skills lesson, where good support was shown for lower-attaining pupils. Those with English as an additional language are often helped and supported by others within their groups. The pupils' high level of respect for the values and beliefs of others is a strength in the school. This was illustrated in many lessons but particularly in religious education lessons where pupils discussed other religions and beliefs respectfully, as when discussing Hindu worship and Muslim marriage.
13. Pupils generally respond well to the increasing range of responsibilities given to them. Year 11 prefects contribute to the life of the school by carrying out a number of duties, including supporting positive behaviour outside classrooms. Pupil representatives on the school council understand the issues involved in improving school facilities. Pupils new to the school value the system of 'buddies' to help them settle into their tutor groups.
14. Attendance and punctuality are poor. Although attendance did improve slightly after the last inspection, it has decreased during the current year and remains well below the national average. This affects progress and learning for many pupils. Poor attendance is not restricted to any particular year group or tutor group. Few classes have better than 90 per cent attendance and some classes frequently have levels well below 80 per cent. A significant number of pupils have poor attendance of below 70 per cent. Several factors contribute to poor attendance. Many pupils start and leave the school during the year, but this is not the only contributory factor. A further factor is the relaxed attitude of many parents to the importance of regular school attendance. Sickness, several long-term absentees and some non-attending pupils also affect the figures. While there have been considerable improvements in the attendance of Traveller children their overall attendance remains low. The rate of unauthorised absence is very high, and is well above the national average. The school has difficulty obtaining reasons for absence from some parents, but standard letters are not available in community languages. In addition, the systems and procedures to follow up absence have not been sufficiently effective. Poor punctuality is also a significant problem in the school. Many pupils arrive late for school including several who are persistently late; some pupils come late to lessons during the day.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

15. Teaching is good overall. This is a considerable improvement since the last inspection, and is a consequence of the vigorous action taken to eliminate weaknesses, to improve lesson planning, to raise teachers' expectations and to set them challenging targets. Teaching is satisfactory or better in almost 97 per cent of lessons and is good or better in nearly two-thirds. There is slightly more of the better teaching at Key Stage 4 and less that is unsatisfactory. It is as a result of this that most pupils learn quickly and make good progress, particularly in Years 10 and 11. There is also a higher proportion of the good and better teaching in English, ICT, music and physical education but a smaller proportion in science, art, design and technology and geography.
16. Teachers use questioning well to review what has been taught previously and to consolidate learning. The good targeting of questions and the review of previous work in a Year 7 mathematics lesson on angles were coupled with clear, direct teaching in a logical sequence of small steps to generate a good pace to the pupils' learning. A similarly good pace was established through effective questioning in a Year 10 English lesson on *Macbeth*. A good review by the teacher helped to reinforce learning in this class, while the challenge in a low ability set studying the same text produced a good response from the pupils. Questioning is also used by some teachers to emphasise their high expectations of the pupils, as in a Year 10 geography lesson, where the pupils were forced to think carefully about the features of the rainforest. This lesson was well planned to utilise a variety of activities all of which showed the teacher's very good knowledge of the material being taught. As in this lesson, effective questioning often results from the teacher's strong subject expertise.
17. Many teachers use their knowledge to teach lively and interesting lessons and contribute to the consistently high proportion of very good teaching in subjects such as physical education. A particular example was in an excellent Year 7 basketball lesson. The constant reinforcement of

the main teaching points, good individual attention, timely interventions and the excellent technical knowledge evident in the quality of questioning resulted in all pupils developing new skills rapidly.

18. Good subject knowledge was also particularly evident in a Year 11 music lesson, through the carefully structured plan to the lesson, the very effective use of questioning to draw out thoughts and ideas from the pupils and the value placed on the pupils' contributions. This resulted in the pupils working with much effort and interest. Enthusiasm and interest were also generated very effectively by giving plenty of praise and encouragement in a Year 11 French lesson. The variety of tasks adopted maintained the pupils' interest and helped them to build up their knowledge systematically.
19. A particular feature of many lessons is the care with which teachers extend the language skills of the pupils. Opportunities are planned for the pupils to read aloud and to speak at length when answering questions or participating in discussions. The key vocabulary associated with a subject is emphasised, often by displays within the classroom. The development of these key skills was particularly effective in a science lessons on how to care for the natural environment. An interesting discussion was generated by the teacher, who encouraged the pupils to express their own ideas while developing the correct use of key vocabulary. The respect and value, which the pupils' contributions were shown gave them the confidence to participate. The pupils' contributions were also valued in a Year 9 top mathematics set where the clear and well-structured explanations enabled new learning to take place rapidly but systematically. The pupils' involvement was encouraged in an excellent Year 8 religious education lesson on Hindu worship. Technical terms were emphasised, a very wide range of teaching methods was employed and a good review consolidated what had been learnt. These skills have enabled most teachers to establish a good atmosphere in their classrooms to which the pupils respond well by concentrating and giving of their best. This was seen to particularly good effect in a Year 8 history lesson where the teacher managed the pupils' behaviour with authority and humour, encouraging their participation and generating a challenge and a pace to learning.
20. Careful lesson planning is a requirement of the headteacher as a means to improve teaching. Lessons are well planned, with clear objectives for the pupils' learning, a variety of activities to interest the pupils generally pitched at different levels to meet the needs of individuals, and with learning systematically developed and reviewed. When this is coupled with very skilled direct teaching, as in a Year 11 English lesson studying World War II poetry, very good progress is made. An excellent Year 7 history lesson benefited from an imaginative plan and activities that effectively developed the pupils' knowledge of, and their empathy with, the conflict between Henry II and Becket. Strong direct teaching and the demanding intellectual responses required by the teacher extended the thinking of all pupils. The good control of the teacher, linked to good subject knowledge and an effective lesson plan using a variety of activities, resulted in good progress in a Year 10 ICT lesson. Again, very confident teaching of a well-planned Year 11 PSHE lesson, in which a variety of activities were used to help the pupils to understand how to undertake written examination papers, enabled the teacher to express high expectations while valuing each pupil's contribution.
21. Shortcomings occurred in the small proportion of unsatisfactory lessons and in some that were otherwise well taught. In some cases a lack of control, with pupils allowed to shout out answers or move around the room without permission, slowed progress. The time spent on direct teaching was at times too long, so that some pupils became bored, or too short, resulting in key points not being fully developed.
22. The specialist teaching of pupils with English as an additional language is good. The pupils' learning is developed systematically through a variety of interesting activities. They develop confidence through the encouragement and praise of the teachers, to which they respond by working hard. There are times when these pupils are grouped in classes with pupils with special educational needs. These arrangements need to be carefully monitored as they sometimes result in those with English as an additional language being presented with poor models of language and, at times, of behaviour.
23. The teaching by special educational needs staff, whether in withdrawal classes or when providing support to individual pupils or groups of pupils in class, varies from satisfactory to very good, and is good overall. The teachers are experienced and effective. They cover a range of expertise between them, including specific learning difficulties and behaviour as well as general skills in

raising literacy standards and other aspects of special educational needs. They expect much of their pupils, setting a fast pace, for example in the 'Fast Track' (additional literacy support) lessons. Good subject knowledge enables them to support pupils well, for example, in mathematics and French lessons. The planning of 'Fast Track' lessons is meticulous, with well-chosen special educational needs materials, tightly-timed and carefully sequenced activities and impressive teaching both by the class teachers and those leading the groups. In Year 7 the 'Fast Track' pupils were working on simplified texts of Shakespeare plays or Dickens' *Oliver Twist*, and taking pleasure in their understanding of quite difficult story lines, whilst improving their reading and language skills. Very good progress was being made both in coverage of the English syllabus and in improving standards of literacy. The track was indeed fast. This provision is very effective. The transfer of information to subject teachers about the special educational needs of pupils in their classes is done very efficiently through the special educational needs register, which also reproduces the individual education plan (IEP) targets for all pupils at Stage 2 and upwards. All but a few teachers use this information in their lesson planning. In-class support teachers are aware of lesson plans in advance and draft their own plans accordingly.

24. There are a few aspects of teaching by some class teachers that could be improved for pupils with special educational needs. Some of their marking is unhelpful. It is sometimes barely legible to any pupil, presenting a particular difficulty to those whose language skills are weak. It often gives excessive praise, in contrast to the high expectations of pupils shown by the specialist teachers, but lacks guidance on how to improve. Some of the phrases used look patronising and are unconvincing to pupils who are struggling to improve and who know that their work is not "brilliant" or "fantastic". A few lessons contain so much exposition by the teacher that it is difficult for the pupils to participate fully and for the support teacher to work effectively.
25. Modifications of lessons to meet individual needs are excellent in 'Fast Track' lessons. Lesson plans for pupils receiving individual tuition are appropriately and well planned. Mainstream lessons are planned well when support teachers are involved and on other occasions, but not always when the special educational needs teachers are not directly involved. This same variation also applies to the provision of appropriate learning materials, which are invariably good in the 'Fast Track' lessons, well matched to the different needs of the pupils in the class, and in some other lessons where support teachers are present. There are other occasions where there are no materials specifically for those with special educational needs.

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

26. The curriculum provided, and the way that it is organised, does much to realise the school's aim of meeting the individual needs of pupils and ensuring that, as far as possible, all are equally included in the range of activities offered. The amount of teaching time has been increased since the last inspection and it is now in line with that recommended. The curriculum continues to be broad and balanced and the weaknesses in music and design and technology identified in the previous report have been remedied. Statutory requirements for the teaching of the National Curriculum and religious education are met. Much energy is put into meeting the needs of individuals or groups of pupils wherever possible. For example, the timetable is revised so that groups of pupils who arrive speaking little or no English are provided with more intensive language support before they experience the full curriculum offered to their year group. The opportunity is also taken to establish programmes for individual pupils at Key Stage 4 who would benefit from a wider experience than the school itself can provide, through links with a local college or skill centre. Attempts to provide such programmes systematically for a discrete cohort of pupils have proved unsuccessful, but possibilities continue to be explored. Good links with the partner sixth form college also provide secure routes for further study for pupils after 16.
27. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum and opportunities to learn. Setting arrangements are generally used well to enable the teachers to pitch work at the right level for the pupils. Different activities are provided for pupils with different levels of prior attainment or extension activities are made available for those who make rapid progress. Gifted and talented pupils have been identified, activities have been initiated to meet their needs more fully and targets for their attainment set and monitored.
28. The curricular arrangements for pupils with special educational needs are very good. The school's generally inclusive approach benefits pupils with special educational needs and its curricular

arrangements are consistent with this. All pupils are taught for the greater part of their learning time in mainstream classes. Those with very severe weaknesses in literacy are withdrawn for individual tuition and show good progress as a consequence. Other pupils are withdrawn for specific purposes. Pupils attending the 'Fast Track' lessons combine improvement in their standards of literacy with coverage of subject syllabuses. They are sometimes withdrawn from subjects with limited curriculum time, such as music, and this does mean that they miss substantial amounts of learning in those subjects. However, overall there is a very good range of provision.

29. Pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language are taught for much of the week in a small group, and receive intensive tuition. Support for these pupils is good. Materials are prepared to teach key vocabulary and materials are modified to be more accessible to the pupils.
30. There is a good focus on developing important skills. ICT lessons provide the pupils with a good range of experiences, although much more use needs to be made of the skills developed to support learning in other subjects. Much attention is paid to developing the literacy of all pupils, with all subjects focusing on key vocabulary and providing systematic opportunities for pupils to read, often aloud to the rest of the class, write, speak and listen. Activities to develop the pupils' number skills are part of tutor time, with other opportunities provided through key subjects such as science and geography. Planning for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is good and the programme also provides the opportunity for careers education and guidance. Ideas and issues, including sex education and drugs misuse, are explored at the right time and level for each age group so that they are relevant and pertinent.
31. Numerous opportunities are provided outside of lessons to support the pupils' academic progress. Activities range from access to ICT equipment at lunchtime and after school, to clinics for revision before SATs or module tests or the submission of coursework. Approximately one-third of pupils participate in extra-curricular sport and about 40 receive instrumental tuition. There are opportunities to take part in a wide range of musical activity, and visits from theatre groups enhance work in English and drama. Other links such as with a local professional football club are also being developed to enhance the broader curriculum for pupils.
32. Great emphasis is placed on the pupils' personal development and overall provision is now good. This is a very considerable improvement since the last inspection. The life of the school is built upon generating a sense of respect for oneself and for others. Opportunities are routinely planned for pupils to work co-operatively together and to listen to the views and ideas of others through discussion and presentations. There is an increasing emphasis on the pupils working more independently as they get older. They are encouraged to take on positions of responsibility, such as prefects and librarians. Moral issues are confronted in lessons and assemblies and the pupils are encouraged to distinguish right from wrong. The recent work and displays in response to Holocaust week were particularly effective in addressing issues of race, culture and discrimination. The pupils' cultural development is also well supported through music, art and drama, where the contribution made by a wide range of cultures is encompassed. Many teachers seize the opportunity to encourage the pupils to reflect upon their own life and place in the universe. The context of many assemblies, including the act of worship, further supports spiritual development, although this does not happen for every pupil every day.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

33. The school provides a high level of pastoral support and care that meets the wide variety of personal and educational needs of the pupils in the school. Good support is offered to recent arrivals into this country, many of whom have traumatic pasts and little knowledge of English. Form tutors play a central role in the pastoral structure and liaise closely with the heads of year and the assistant headteacher responsible for pastoral care. Tutors know their pupils well and have a genuine concern for their progress and personal well-being. Good use is made of outside agencies. The learning mentor provides valuable individual support to pupils where necessary, helping them to build up their self-esteem, sustain their concentration and co-operate with other pupils. The recently introduced mentoring system for pupils in Year 11 reflects the school's commitment to improving examination performance. Pupils have confidence in their teachers and find them approachable and accessible. The PSHE programme is effective and raises awareness of issues relating to health, relationships and bullying. Each half term the pupils' achievements are recognised and rewarded in assemblies. Pupils' personal development is well monitored. Issues and concerns are carefully recorded and important information shared at daily monitoring meetings.
34. Appropriate child protection procedures are in place. Most staff are aware of the designated person and would take suitable action in the event of any concerns. Provision for day-to-day first-aid and medical care is satisfactory. Informal daily checks of the site and premises are carried out and action quickly taken where needed. The local authority regularly carries out more formal checks. Most equipment in the school is subject to annual checks and the new site manager is aware of the need to ensure that all equipment is regularly checked.
35. Effective measures are taken to promote and monitor good behaviour. A structured behaviour management programme has played a significant part in improving behaviour and contributing to the orderly atmosphere. The standard of behaviour expected is made very clear to pupils and is understood by most. Staff work together to ensure good standards of behaviour and to eliminate bullying when it occurs. They make appropriate use of rewards and sanctions and a system of report books to monitor and help pupils who find it difficult to behave well all of the time. This has brought a greater consistency to the way teachers manage behaviour. The school carefully records data about behaviour, enabling appropriate support to be provided. The newly introduced Learning Support Unit provides extra help for those who are having extreme difficulties in fulfilling the school's expectations and whose behaviour is likely to lead to exclusion. Bullying sometimes occurs, but pupils confirm that teachers deal quickly and firmly with any incidents brought to their notice.
36. The school is committed to improving levels of attendance, but, despite its initiatives, attendance rates have not improved significantly. Attendance is regularly monitored and those individual pupils and tutor groups who attend well are rewarded. Data on attendance and punctuality are supplied to year heads, who follow up serious cases with parents, and some of the pupils with severe attendance problems are targeted. Tutors, heads of year and senior staff work together and with the education social worker to monitor and follow up those pupils whose attendance and punctuality cause the greatest concern. Each day a member of the administrative staff follows up many of the unexplained absences, but additional measures to reduce the high levels of unauthorised absence are not sufficiently regular and systematic. The school takes seriously the high number of late arrivals to school but the system of detention is not proving an effective deterrent.
37. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good overall. Arrangements are thorough for pupils entering the school, based on the transfer of information from primary schools and a wide range of assessments made in Year 7. Very effective use is made of this information to guide pupils into appropriate teaching groups and to provide teachers with comprehensive information on each pupil. Teachers use this information effectively to plan lessons and help individuals. Work is regularly assessed and appropriate records are kept in subject areas. The assessment co-ordinator provides a considerable amount of data for teachers, which is accessible and retrievable. The use of assessment data to guide curricular planning is satisfactory. There are examples of good practice in physical education, science and history. For example, in physical education a change to a more appropriate examination board and the updating of schemes of work both happened as a result of analysing data. At the last inspection school-wide procedures for assessment had only recently been introduced and departments were not consistently implementing the school policy. This is no longer the case; the procedures are

now effectively applied. Overall, good progress has been made but the analysis and use of information to raise pupils' achievement further are areas for development.

38. The assessment of pupils with special educational needs is very good. Individual educational plans (IEPs) are very effective. They are detailed, with scores indicating previous achievement, specific weaknesses noted, targets set and much more information, all presented succinctly. The targets are realistic. These are made known to all staff as an addition to the special educational needs register, with space for subject teachers to record progress towards the achievement of targets. Annual reviews are carried out very well, with evidence of high quality assessments received from all contributors, and a refreshing honesty when targets have not been achieved. Reviews are completed on time and parents are involved as they should be. The reviews form part of the well-maintained colour-coded pupil records. The administration of assessments and record-keeping is excellent.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

39. Parental support has increased significantly since the previous inspection. Those who returned questionnaires and attended the parents' meeting were generally happy with the school. Most feel that their children like school, make good progress and are being helped to develop a sense of responsibility. They consider teaching to be good, believe that the school is well led and managed and feel that staff expect their children to do their best. The inspection supports these positive views. A small number of parents, however, have some concerns about aspects of the school's work. Not all consider behaviour to be good and some do not think that the school provides an interesting range of activities outside the curriculum, neither of which concerns the inspection team can support. Furthermore, some parents do not feel sufficiently informed about their children's progress. The inspection team feels that more could be done to make information accessible to all parents through improved translation services. Many parents raised concerns about the levels and consistency of homework. The inspection team found, however, that in most subjects homework was being set regularly and often complemented work covered in lessons.
40. The relationship with parents is satisfactory and improving, although parents have little impact in general on the work of the school. Parents are made to feel welcome and have good access to senior members of staff. They are contacted quickly if there is cause for concern and many tutors regularly contact parents either by letter or telephone. The pupil learning mentor acts as a valuable link between the school and parents. Although the need for parental involvement is recognised there are few opportunities for parents to work closely with the school. Links with parents from the Somali and Romany communities have improved, but there remains scope for the development of closer working relationships with other ethnic groups in the school.
41. Parental involvement in learning is satisfactory. For many reasons some parents find it hard to support their children's education. Pupils come from a wide area of London and this, together with the transitory nature of the school population, limits parental involvement. At present, for example, there is no parents' association. Homework planners provide a useful means of contact between school and home, but they are not always used. Checking to see if homework is completed and signing diaries are problems for parents with limited English. This affects the contribution parents can make to children's learning at home. To compensate for this, the school provides regular homework clubs after school, supported by members of some of the minority ethnic communities. Whilst some parents complain about the lack of homework set, others fail to support the school by insisting that their children complete it on time.
42. The quality of information for parents is satisfactory, although communication is limited between the school and the many parents whose home language is not English. Interpreters are available at meetings but written communication between the school and the many parents for whom English is an additional language is not routine. The prospectus contains some useful information about the school but does not include all that is needed to meet statutory requirements. Detailed well-presented curriculum guides are issued at the beginning of the year. Letters inform parents about forthcoming events and diary dates, but parents do not receive regular newsletters containing information about the day-to-day activities of the school. Annual reports contain sufficient information for parents to understand what their child can do and where they need to improve. Each year group holds at least one consultation evening for parents to discuss their children's progress and parents have the opportunity to attend their children's academic review, although few do so. Heads of year work hard to encourage parents to attend parents' meetings

and make personal contact with parents who do not, to arrange alternative times for them to discuss their children's progress

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

43. The school was in a parlous position when the current headteacher was appointed in 1997. After the inspection in 1996 it was made subject to special measures, and the number of pupils was falling. Standards were low and teaching poor, as was the pupils' behaviour. The school was not held in any great esteem in the area, attracting few first choice applicants. The school has been rescued from its downward spiral principally because of the strong leadership provided by the headteacher and the experience he has brought.
44. The headteacher leads and manages very well. He has brought to the school clarity of purpose, higher expectations and a well-conceived plan for its improvement. This has been successfully communicated to all who are associated with the school and has been instrumental in the recent progress made. The headteacher has high expectations of the staff and continually challenges them to reflect on their performance and practice with the aim of improving teaching and raising standards. High, challenging targets have been set and used successfully to drive up GCSE results. Virtually all of the weaknesses identified in previous inspection reports have been eliminated and the school now has many significant strengths. Its popularity with parents has also increased, with indications that the applications for Year 7 in September 2001 will exceed the places available.
45. Senior managers work effectively as a team, sharing the headteacher's drive to improve the school. They carry out their individual roles well. Line management responsibilities are clear and used very effectively to maintain the momentum for improvement. Middle managers, such as heads of department and heads of year, are held accountable to senior management. They lead their areas well, by and large. Most have responded well to the challenges presented and have helped to achieve improvements throughout the school.
46. Provision for special educational needs is a well managed aspect of the school. The SENCO (special educational needs co-ordinator) is experienced and very competent. They have areas of expertise that complement each other. The policy and other documents covering special educational needs are comprehensive and meet the needs of the school and of most parents. A simpler, less comprehensive paper in leaflet form would be helpful as an introduction to parents. The administration of the department is efficient. The department's planning is well directed to making improvements to already good provision.
47. A major factor in enabling senior management to identify and tackle weaknesses and to help to communicate the commitment to higher standards has been the establishment of systematic processes for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. Assessment and examination data are analysed in great detail and used to compare the performance of individual subjects. This has helped to identify where a subject's performance falls behind others so that steps can be taken to bring about improvements. This information is also used to set targets for departments and to make clear the headteacher's commitment to raising expectations, standards and the quality of teaching. Regular observation of teaching, scrutiny of pupils' books and external monitoring of departments have all been used very effectively to bring about improvements.
48. The governing body is becoming increasingly effective in fulfilling its responsibilities. It has undergone considerable changes since the last inspection, when it was not operating effectively. Immediately after the inspection, the local authority withdrew the management of the budget from the governors, and experience and expertise were added to the governing body. Responsibilities have gradually been returned as the school has dealt with and overcome its weaknesses. Governors share the headteacher's vision for the school's future. The committee structure is developing, assisting governors in gaining an understanding of the challenges facing the school. Out of necessity, the headteacher had to lead planning for improvement and financial planning. Governors now need to develop their role further so that they can help to establish a shared view for the next stage of the school's improvement and scrutinise its work more closely.
49. The school has benefited considerably from a high level of funding. This has been used well to appoint experienced staff, to keep class sizes small and to provide teachers with an above average proportion of non-teaching time. Other funding, such as from the 'Excellence In Cities'

initiative, has been used effectively in work with particular groups of pupils. For example, the programme for gifted and talented pupils has been developed, a base established to provide support for pupils who are in danger of permanent exclusion and an effective scheme of mentoring pupils introduced. Other funding has been used to good effect to provide additional help for pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. Financial planning has been handled well by the headteacher. Money is used wisely and the school seeks to get the best value whenever buying goods or services.

50. Staffing levels are generally suited to the requirements of the curriculum but two areas causing concern are the lack of a head of department in design and technology and the continued use of temporary staff in modern foreign languages. Each new member of staff has a thorough induction programme whereby they understand the working of the school. Short-term supply teachers are also well supported. There is a comprehensive training programme for staff but the effects in some areas, such as ICT, are not yet reaching all the pupils. The accommodation is generally good for the number of pupils and has been considerably redecorated, but has some shortcomings. The school has made good use of all areas with bright, lively and interesting displays. The accommodation for design and technology is unsatisfactory but a new block is under construction, as is a new science laboratory. The facilities for physical education are the weakest in that the range of opportunities offered to the pupils is restricted by having only one indoor area; the journey to the playing field limits the time available for outdoor activities.
51. The provision of learning resources is unsatisfactory overall. Although in a number of subjects, there are enough textbooks and consumable materials, shortages exist in several important areas. An extra design and technology workshop was opened last September but without a full additional set of practical equipment. Consequently, pupils have to share tools, which slows their progress. The equipment in the food technology area and in control technology is inadequate. The ratio of computers to pupils is only just below average, but two of the networked rooms have old machines running out-dated software. There is also insufficient equipment for control and data logging. The music department does not have enough resources to meet curriculum requirements, with shortages in instruments from other cultures, percussion instruments and computers. The religious education department has had to replace all of its resources from scratch this term; there are currently insufficient artefacts and materials for research, which is restricting teaching all aspects of the curriculum. The 'Active Learning Centre' is a good resource in itself, providing a base for research and homework; however, its stock of library books is low for the number of pupils, and there is too little fiction. Many of the books on the shelves are old and there has still been no systematic cataloguing. Some of these shortcomings will be put right when the new building currently under construction is completed and equipped.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

52. To continue the good progress made since the previous inspection, and to raise standards further, the school needs to:
- Improve standards of work and National Curriculum test results for 14-year-olds by:
 - ensuring that there are more consistent opportunities for pupils to research and to read for pleasure (paragraph 64)
 - completing a scheme of work for English to promote greater consistency of practice (paragraph 67)
 - providing opportunities for pupils to use computers on which to draft their work (paragraphs 64 and 66)
 - using a variety of frameworks to support the development of the pupils' writing (paragraph 64)
 - extending the use of computers to support pupils' learning in mathematics (paragraph 73)
 - continuing the drive to improve basic numeracy (paragraph 73)

- improving pupil discipline in some mathematics lessons (paragraph 71)
 - developing the good and very good features of science teaching more uniformly across the department (paragraph 78)
- Reduce the high levels of absence and improve punctuality to school by applying more rigorously the procedures currently in place. (paragraphs 14 and 36)
- Plan systematically for all pupils to apply and develop their ICT skills and provide opportunities for pupils to use computers to support their learning in all subjects. (paragraphs 30 and 106)

OTHER ISSUES

53. In addition to the items above, the governors may wish to consider the inclusion of the following points in their action plan.
- Improve the range of the book stock in the library. (paragraph 51)
 - Seek ways of improving the facilities for the teaching of physical education. (paragraph 123)
 - Increase resources in music, religious education and ICT equipment. (paragraphs 51, 107, 118 and 129)
 - Ensure that teachers consider carefully the groupings of pupils with English as an additional language and special educational needs within their classrooms. (paragraph 57)

THE PROVISION FOR AND STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS WITH ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

54. There are pupils from many ethnic backgrounds in the school. Pupils speak 42 languages and about half of the pupils speak English as an additional language. There are 16 pupils in the early stages of English language acquisition. The good provision for these pupils is a good example of the school's concern to ensure that all pupils can benefit from all the educational opportunities provided.
55. Pupils at the early stages of English language acquisition make good progress. About half of those in the later stages of language acquisition make satisfactory progress, but this does hamper their progress in a several subjects. A substantial minority of those at the later stages of English acquisition achieve well. This is partly because they have above average ability and take advantage of the support offered by after-school clubs. A significant proportion of these higher achievers have realistic ambitions to enter the professions. The two head boys of the school speak English as an additional language and have made excellent progress during their short time at the school.
56. Pupils in Key Stage 3 are lively and interested. Older pupils are eager to learn and work hard to improve their standard of written and spoken English. Throughout the school, they respond well to the good teaching. Lessons are carefully planned to include a variety of activities that extend and consolidate their knowledge of English in a systematic and accessible way. Excellent liaison with subject teachers allows the teacher of English as an additional language to prepare the pupils successfully for the linguistic demands of most subjects. There is a motivating use of praise. Lessons are pleasant occasions, with pupils eager to work hard and contribute orally to proceedings.
57. A specialist teaches pupils in the early stages of English acquisition separately, in small groups. In some other subjects, grouping is unsatisfactory. Pupils with English as an additional language are often taught alongside pupils with special educational needs. This is causing some confusion amongst parents, and the school's rationale for this grouping should be clearly explained to them. There is some evidence that the attitudes of younger pupils in the early stages of language acquisition are becoming influenced by those of disaffected special educational needs pupils. Expectations of pupils with English as an additional language in these mixed groups are too low, and they do not always make enough progress in these subjects.
58. Support in class is good for those with relatively little English. Intervention is sympathetic and

skilful. The support teachers make a positive difference to pupils' learning. They prepare easily accessible materials to help pupils learn and provide them with the key vocabulary to make learning secure. Systematic support for those on higher levels of language acquisition, however, is inadequate.

59. Baseline assessment of pupils when they enter the school is very good. The day-to-day assessment of pupils with English as an additional language is reliable and comprehensive and is used well in lesson planning. Effective personal support and advice are available when pupils are at the earlier stages of language acquisition. Pupils on the later stages must seek it out. Too often pupils do not do this, and so opportunities to provide much-needed support are missed. Good support is being provided for the Romany Traveller children. The careful monitoring of their achievements and the help that they are given through homework clubs have a significant impact on the progress that they are making.
60. The partnership with parents of pupils with English as an additional language is unsatisfactory. There is a poor response from parents to letters sent to them because they cannot always understand them. Some parents have requested an interpreter at parents' evenings; to provide one would ensure that parents do not make a wasted journey to the school. Letters home are not routinely translated into key languages. Close links have been established with Traveller families, to encourage parents and pupils to recognise the importance of education. One result is that the attendance of these children has improved considerably and some successfully study at Key Stage 4. The school has also worked with some success to recognise, value and celebrate the differing religious and cultural traditions of the pupils at the school. This has served to raise the esteem of many pupils.
61. Co-ordination of provision for pupils with English as an additional language is satisfactory. Management is efficient. Staffing is adequate, but greater support would lead to greater progress. The induction of pupils into the life of the school is excellent. The school does not monitor effectively enough the achievement of those who arrive at the school in the very early stages of language acquisition. Opportunities to acquire potentially valuable information are therefore missed. Resources for learning are satisfactory, but there is a serious shortage of: reading books appropriate to the pupils' ages; dual language reading books; bilingual dictionaries designed for young learners; and interactive software. Word-based board games which would add variety to lessons and help to consolidate pupils' learning are also lacking.
62. The provision for English as an additional language was not inspected at the last inspection, but was evaluated at a review of progress by HMI made one year ago. The arrangements for grouping pupils with English as an additional language has not been improved since then and still gives cause for concern. However, the teaching of oral skills to pupils with English as an additional language observed during this inspection was good, and a clear improvement on those seen a year ago.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	151
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	45

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	23	39	31	3	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
Number of pupils on the school's roll	487
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	311

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	15
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	116

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	234

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	106
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	33

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.9
National comparative data	7.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	4.7
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	77	0	77

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	17	25	21
	Girls	N/a	N/a	N/a
	Total	17	25	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	22 (13)	32 (27)	27 (13)
	National	63 (63)	62 (63)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	0 (2)	9 (16)	4 (2)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	19	25	11
	Girls	N/a	N/a	N/a
	Total	19	25	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	25 (36)	32 (29)	14 (35)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	3 (16)	7 (11)	1 (11)
	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	85	0	85

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	26	65	80
	Girls	N/a	N/a	N/a
	Total	26	65	80
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	31 (15)	76 (71)	94 (89)
	National	47.4 (46.6)	90.6 (90.9)	95.6 (95.8)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	30 (23)
	National	38.4 (38.0)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	54
Black – African heritage	72
Black – other	126
Indian	2
Pakistani	7
Bangladeshi	11
Chinese	2
White	188
Any other minority ethnic group	25

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	22	2
Black – African heritage	10	2
Black – other	9	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	17	1
Other minority ethnic groups	6	1

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)	35.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	13.8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	72.2
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	18.7
Key Stage 4	17.7

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	1677054
Total expenditure	1699082
Expenditure per pupil	3870
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	-22028

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	477
Number of questionnaires returned	172

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	27	5	2	2
My child is making good progress in school.	51	40	7	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	54	32	8	4	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	36	18	6	3
The teaching is good.	57	36	4	1	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	55	29	14	2	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	59	28	6	4	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	72	22	3	1	3
The school works closely with parents.	50	35	11	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	54	35	4	0	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	51	38	7	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	38	37	11	5	9

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

ENGLISH

63. In Standard Assessment Tests (SATs) in 2000, the percentage of pupils gaining Level 5 was very low in comparison with the national average and below the results achieved in mathematics and science at the school. No pupils gained Level 6. These results were well below those achieved by similar schools. In 2000, the percentage of pupils gaining A*-C grades in English at GCSE level was below the national average achieved but well above those achieved by similar schools. Results in English Literature are even higher. Results in English Literature were above the national average. GCSE results in both English and English Literature improved considerably in 2000.
64. Standards are improving at Key Stage 3 although the overall standard of work seen was well below expectations. Many higher-attaining pupils achieve average, or in a few cases above average, standards. Higher overall attainment is particularly evident in Years 7 and 8. Overall progress is good as a result of good teaching. Progress is good in the development of speaking and listening skills. Pupils respond to instructions and questions and demonstrate satisfactory knowledge and understanding of challenging texts. For example, pupils in Year 9 were able to answer questions on the plot of *Twelfth Night*. They commented on the motivation of the characters, referring to the texts to support their opinion. Teachers have high expectations and appropriately emphasise the development of relevant vocabulary. Drama is a regular feature of lessons and pupils successfully adopt and sustain role as well as effectively presenting poetry, which has been memorised. When given the opportunity, pupils collaborate well in pairs and small groups. For example, Year 8 pupils focused on the language and meaning of a narrative poem as they discussed in groups how the poem was to be performed. Pupils also present and justify ideas, but opportunities for the development of independent learning involving collaboration in groups are inconsistent. Progress in reading is good, including the progress of pupils with special educational needs. By the end of Key Stage 3, most pupils read aloud with accuracy and fluency and some with expression. Pupils are regularly praised and encouraged so that even the more hesitant readers are prepared to read aloud and engage in reflective discussion. The 'Fast Track' reading programme does much to support less fluent readers. Teachers ask probing questions and set challenging tasks which develop understanding. These strategies are particularly evident in literature lessons. For example, Year 8 pupils interpret Shakespearean language to present freeze frames to an audience. The majority of pupils understand a range of challenging materials; however, there are inconsistent opportunities for research and reading for pleasure is insufficiently promoted. The majority of pupils achieve average standards of writing. More able pupils achieve above average standards so that by the end of Key Stage 3, these pupils write at length in a variety of forms and with awareness of audience and purpose. Most pupils display weakness in spelling, punctuation and in the structure of their writing. Where there is good practice plans, models and frameworks are used to support writing development and pupils are encouraged to draft their work. Such strategies are effective but inconsistently implemented and pupils are insufficiently involved in reflecting on and improving writing. Computers are also insufficiently used for drafting purposes.
65. In lessons observed at Key Stage 4, standards achieved by the majority of pupils are below average whilst the achievements of able pupils are in line with expected standards. Teaching is good. Teachers have high expectations of the pupils. They plan lessons well and do much to extend the language skills of all pupils and to develop knowledge and understanding of literature. Progress of all pupils is good. Progress in the development of speaking and listening skills is satisfactory. Teachers appropriately emphasise oral skills to deepen understanding of reading and to develop oracy for the many pupils for whom English is an additional language. For example, prompt sheets are used by one teacher to provide a framework for answers in class discussion. Pupils have opportunities to work in pairs and small groups; they put forward a point of view and refer to texts to support their opinions. Pupils readily respond to teachers' questions and many use standard English. Drama activities are incorporated well so that pupils are often involved in activities such as the role-play of characters in literature, which involves the justification of motives. Technical terms are taught and used. For example, Year 10 pupils know and understand terms such as "tabloid", "broadsheet" and "target audience" as they analyse newspapers. Pupils' reading achievements at Key Stage 4 are good. Progress is good in reading at Key Stage 4 and most pupils achieve satisfactory standards. All pupils are appropriately

challenged by the reading programme. For example, Year 11 pupils read pre-twentieth century poetry with understanding. They locate information from texts and have a good understanding of language read. As a result of good teaching, most pupils are stimulated and actively engaged in textual analysis, they quote accurately from texts to support their ideas and have a good understanding of plot, characters and themes. Writing is more variable in quality; however, progress is satisfactory for the majority of pupils and good in the case of more able pupils. By the end of Key Stage 4, the majority of pupils produce folders of writing which fulfil GCSE requirements. More able pupils often produce well-structured writing in a variety of forms for a range of purposes including critical analysis. Drafting is more evident at this key stage and pupils plan and rework in response to supportive oral and written comments given by teachers. Technical skills are often weak but proof reading is practised. For example, a group in Year 11 produced well-crafted poems which had been reworked. Progress in writing for these pupils was rapid because of good planning, pace and challenge as well as good support by a specialist teacher for pupils with special educational needs.

66. There is a whole school policy for literacy, which does much to support the development of language skills in all subjects. Pupils are required to focus on key words and use relevant vocabulary in all of their studies. There are frequent opportunities to read aloud with appropriate teacher intervention to encourage clarity, accuracy and fluency. This is particularly effective in physical education and science. Writing skills are also developed. For example, in modern foreign languages, pupils are encouraged to express opinions and ideas in writing, whilst in science, there are opportunities to write stories and poems. There is insufficient emphasis on drafting to improve writing but implementation of policy improves the knowledge, skills and understanding of pupils of all abilities.
67. Since the last inspection, good progress has been made in English, particularly in results at GCSE. Improvements are due to the appointment of specialist teachers, good teaching, effective specialist support provided for individual pupils, good relationships between pupils and teachers and positive attitudes to learning demonstrated by the majority of pupils. The newly formed department has yet to share good practice and the schemes of work are not yet fully in place to ensure consistency of practice as well as pupils' progression in learning. Teaching and learning are adequately monitored through lesson observation to ensure consistency of practice as well as pupils' progression in learning.

MATHEMATICS

68. National Curriculum test results for fourteen-year-olds in 2000 for mathematics showed an improvement over previous years but were below the national average and well below the average for similar schools. Results were below those achieved in science but above those in English. The percentage of pupils achieving both Level 5 and above, and Level 6 and above in mathematics fell significantly below the national average, but bettered the corresponding school results in both English and science. In the GCSE examinations for 2000, the proportion of pupils who achieved A*-C grades improved considerably over earlier years, but was still below the national average. These results, however, were well above those in similar schools.
69. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils' overall attainment is below the national average but with a small proportion achieving satisfactorily. The higher-attaining pupils, for example, gave accurate estimates for the value of square roots and recognised that -4 had no such root. Pupils of average attainment were able to construct mathematical equations from verbal statements and made a start on developing a solution. Lower attainers made good use of a computer program to investigate the internal angles of a series of regular polygons. Pupils with special educational needs, those with English as an additional language and traveller pupils achieved appropriately, particularly when supported in class by staff who helped to reinforce the use of correct mathematical terms. The often disrupted nature of the educational backgrounds of many pupils impedes their ability to recall basic numerical facts quickly from memory. This severely limits their progress. Year 8 pupils, for example, were hesitant in dividing 27 by 3. This insecure grasp of basic number facts is a feature of all lessons and is a major factor in depressing the Key Stage 3 attainment.
70. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils' attainment is still below the national average but with a higher proportion attaining in line with national averages. Higher-attaining pupils, for example, developed solutions to non-linear simultaneous equations by the use of graphs. Pupils of average ability

coped well with Pythagoras' theorem, using it to solve problems based on right-angled triangles. Lower-attaining pupils were able to transpose terms in first order equations and develop solutions. Pupils with special educational need, those with English as an additional language and traveller pupils again achieved in line with their group, often without specialist support. A weakness in dealing with basic number facts, though not as severe as at Key Stage 3, continues to limit the progress that many would otherwise make.

71. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 3 is predominantly satisfactory or better. In the lessons seen where it was unsatisfactory, a lack of adequate teacher control led to a marked drop in pace so that progress was impeded. In the very good lessons, good relationships, high but realistic expectations and careful planning all contributed to the positive outcomes. At Key Stage 4 all teaching seen was good. All pupils were treated with respect, even when the response to a question was incorrect. Lessons frequently adopted a three-part structure, which helped the pupils to concentrate on the tasks set, and the purpose and outcomes were clearly understood by them. The teachers systematically help to develop pupils' language by frequent use of key words. All teachers have up-to-date monitoring information for their classes and, in Year 11, this is extended to include detailed pupil self-evaluation. In this respect, the management of the department helps to raise standards.
72. Action is being taken to improve standards of numeracy through focused work during tutor periods and by support for the development of number skills in other subjects such as science and design and technology. This is beginning to show results with improved number skills, particularly at Key Stage 3. The systematic monitoring of the work of the department, with the focus on improving teaching, has contributed to the progress made since the last inspection. Standards and rates of progress have improved since the previous inspection, with the impact being more noticeable at Key Stage 4 than Key Stage 3. Overall the quality of teaching has also improved, again, more so at Key Stage 4. Behaviour at both key stages was good or better in most lessons.
73. Further improvement in mathematics results will depend crucially upon an improvement in pupils' basic number skills. The present tenuous grasp of such skills by the majority of pupils in each age group acts as a major brake to their progress. The department does not use the ethnic diversity of the school as a strength by ensuring that pupils appreciate the multicultural origins of mathematics better. Tracking pupils' progress in the subject would be more effective if it allowed scrutiny of results by ethnicity, language and even mobility. The department could usefully extend its use of the central computer provision to support the pupils' mathematical understanding.

SCIENCE

74. Results in the National Curriculum tests at Key Stage 3 in 2000 were well below the national average. The results were a significant improvement on those achieved in 1999, but there had been no overall improvement over the previous four years. The proportion of pupils reaching Level 5 was equivalent to that in similar schools, although the proportion reaching the higher Level 6 and the average level achieved were both below similar schools. These results were better than in English and mathematics, but raising the results in Key Stage 3 tests remains a key task for the department. The proportion of pupils awarded an A*-C grade at GCSE was below the national average, but well above that in similar schools. These results are broadly equivalent to those in English and mathematics and a considerable improvement since the previous inspection.
75. The pupils demonstrate levels of knowledge and understanding in lessons at Key Stage 3 that show a higher proportion of pupils moving towards the expected level. Higher overall attainment is particularly evident in Years 7 and 8. The prime reason for this is the combination of a significant improvement in the quality of teaching and a corresponding improvement in the attitudes and behaviour of the pupils. Year 9 pupils discussing sexually transmitted diseases were able to combine their knowledge of the human body and micro-organisms to understand how such diseases are spread and how they affect infected people. The teacher had developed a positive working atmosphere with the class, combining high expectations with a relaxed but purposeful approach. As a consequence the pupils responded in a mature and responsible way to this potentially sensitive topic and learning progressed steadily. Year 8 pupils listened carefully as the teacher and other pupils read aloud a passage about the impact of humans on the environment. They were able to demonstrate care and concern because of the secure learning

environment established. They responded positively to the opportunity to produce a piece of writing for homework, perhaps a poem, about an environmental concern that they themselves had. This work was based, for example, on a secure understanding of feeding relationships between different organisms in a habitat.

76. A good emphasis on developing language skills also underpins much work in lessons at Key Stage 4, where the pupils are continuing to work at the higher levels shown by last year's GCSE results. The teacher's focus on key words and their meaning in a Year 11 lesson looking at the diffraction of waves, for example, enabled the pupils to express their ideas with increasing clarity and accuracy. Ideas from previous lessons had been reviewed well through a question and answer session at the start of the lesson, and further consolidated at the end by further questioning of the pupils. The pupils' knowledge and understanding are also made more secure when the teacher requires them to apply their ideas to predict what will happen in a new situation. In a Year 10 lesson looking at chemical reactions, for example, the pupils were able to draw upon their knowledge of the reactivity of different metals to suggest what the products of different reactions would be. The teacher supported this work with an effective demonstration that provided the pupils with a visual confirmation of their ideas.
77. The good focus on understanding key words and using demonstrations and models to provide pupils with direct observations supports all pupils in gaining access to the ideas of the lesson. Consequently those pupils with English as an additional language, for example, make the same secure progress as their peers. Pupils with special educational needs also make satisfactory progress in general, although their learning is most often good when additional adult support is present. Many pupils, of all ages, have quite weak practical and investigation skills and the department is therefore intending to place more emphasis on developing these key skills. Appropriate emphasis is placed on using numbers in calculations and constructing graphs. The pupils' number skills are usually sufficiently well developed to support their learning in science. Some good use is made of ICT, but equipment to enable the pupils to capture and monitor physical data for themselves is not readily available and therefore not sufficiently used.
78. There is much effective monitoring and evaluation of teaching and standards, both by senior managers and the head of department. Significant improvement has been made since the previous inspection and this is evident in most aspects of the department. Standards have improved and the learning and achievement of pupils are now satisfactory. Their attitudes and behaviour are good. Teaching is satisfactory at both key stages, often good and occasionally very good and only rarely less than satisfactory. Staffing is now more stable. This provides the opportunity to develop the good and very good aspects of teaching more uniformly across the department and thus raise standards even further.

ART AND DESIGN

79. Standards in GCSE examinations have remained stable since the last inspection, and continue to be in line with national averages. The subject is a very popular option at Key Stage 4 and the number of pupils taking it is well above the national average.
80. Standards at Key Stage 3 are generally satisfactory. The best work seen was in drawing and graphic work. The pupils produced some lively compositions in preparation for a still life, based on research into the contents of a shop window, and design work was colourful. The handling of paint was satisfactory when used thinly, but limited in its expressive qualities.
81. Key Stage 4 standards reflect the most recent GCSE results. Standards are highest in graphic activities and in some examples of observational drawing. Paint is used effectively for design and graphic purposes, but pupils still lack the confidence to use it experimentally. In a project on surrealism, pupils made imaginative connections between a room they had drawn and the contents they were required to put into it. In architectural studies, when given supporting resources provided by the teacher, pupils were able to select and identify key features of notable architectural buildings.
82. At both key stages, although research and sketchbook activities are encouraged through the provision of a range of carefully prepared supporting worksheets, the general ability of pupils in the process of visual enquiry is poor. Some large-scale murals in the school hall, produced by groups of pupils, demonstrated confident design skills, and were a bright and lively addition to the

school environment. The course programme introduces a very wide range of cultural references to pupils, but their knowledge of art and art history is limited. The response of pupils was satisfactory in all lessons, but many pupils find the subject difficult because they lack basic skills. However, they persevere and remain on task throughout.

83. Standards of teaching were always satisfactory and often good. Lessons are introduced using a range of carefully prepared stimuli and concentration is ensured by a highly structured programme of teaching utilising a wide range of appropriate styles, to maintain pace, and challenge pupils in order to raise attainment. Teachers insist on high standards of behaviour. They consistently demand successfully that pupils concentrate and persevere with their work.
84. As a result of a decrease in staff numbers in recent years the art and design curriculum has narrowed, and now consists predominantly of a diet of two-dimensional and graphic work. However, pupil numbers have now started to increase, and a further teacher has been appointed. In order to broaden pupils' experience by offering a wider range of artistic experiences, there is now the need to reintroduce three-dimensional activities and bring a disused workshop back into use. ICT activities could also be increased if resources within the department were expanded.
85. This is an effective department which has continued to respond to the challenge of change since the last inspection, through a consistent programme of monitoring and development. This is now an opportune moment to build on the effectively established standards of good discipline by broadening the art curriculum.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

86. The number of pupils achieving A*-C grades in the 2000 GCSE examinations was well above the national average. When compared with the national results for boys, the results were very high. GCSE results have improved consistently over the last four years. The results last year are exceptionally high when compared with those reported at the last inspection. Pupils' results were equally high in food studies and resistant materials, but were much lower in graphic products.
87. Attainment on entry to the school is well below average. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils' attainment is slightly below the national expectation, with about half of the pupils achieving the expected level. Very few pupils achieve standards above this. However, this shows an enormous improvement on standards of attainment reported in the last inspection. The quality of the pupils' practical work has improved since then and it is now of a standard similar to that of pupils of the same age nationally. This is partly because all of the teachers are now specialists and their subject knowledge is secure. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers provide competent demonstrations of practical skills. Consequently, pupils learn new skills quickly and are given the chance to practise and improve them. Schemes of work are now detailed and ensure that the pupils acquire appropriate skills and knowledge in a logical sequence. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are now appropriately high. Homework is set on a regular basis and it supports or extends work in lessons. Teachers have recently introduced a strategy whereby pupils know what they need to do to achieve different levels. In food technology, pupils set themselves targets at the beginning of each piece of work. The teacher then provides them with the support and guidance they need to achieve their targets. This approach is sensibly being adopted throughout the department. Teachers consistently follow the design process, ensuring that the pupils have opportunities to carry out research and to use it to help them produce detailed design specifications. Drawing skills are taught well and used in all aspects of the subject. However, pupils do not take enough care with the presentation of their work. Pupils find the evaluation of their work difficult, particularly in resistant materials and graphics. A lack of resources means that pupils currently have insufficient opportunities to use computers and their experience in electronics is very limited. Attainment in these aspects of the subject is unsatisfactory, but should improve when the new technology building opens later this year.
88. Key Stage 4 pupils are achieving standards close to the national average overall, but attainment in food studies is higher than it is in resistant materials and graphics products. Frequent absence from school means that a significant number of pupils are struggling to finish their coursework on time. This is affecting the quality of their work adversely and is likely to affect their final examination grades. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers give freely of their time after school to help those pupils who want to improve their work. A large number of pupils attend these sessions, indicating much improved attitudes compared with the last inspection. In resistant

materials, pupils' oral responses show that they know more than their written work suggests. Their ability to evaluate their work and explain the reasons for any changes is weak. Teachers are aware of this and are giving effective guidance on how to improve, for example, in a Year 11 lesson where pupils had to produce a written evaluation of their models before beginning to make the final article. Teachers manage pupils well. As a result, a purposeful working atmosphere is created and time is effectively used. Pupils are generally well motivated. They are happy to help each other, either by making useful suggestions or by providing an extra pair of hands when needed. Teachers mark work frequently and provide useful advice on what pupils need to do to achieve more marks. This is contributing to the achievement of good examination results.

89. The lack of easy access to computers, the absence of any computer-aided designing and making equipment and very limited electronics resources mean that the pupils' experience is not as broad as it should be. The school is aware of this and has taken steps to ensure that these facilities will be provided in the new technology suite. Teachers are competent to use these resources effectively when they become available. The department is beginning to update current schemes of work to ensure that the changes to the National Curriculum are met. The monitoring of the work of the department, in particular the observation of teaching has contributed to the improvements made since the last inspection. The teachers and the technician have put time and thought into improving the learning environment in the workshops, which would otherwise be poor. This has helped to produce a safe and interesting working environment until the new technology suite opens. With the exception of accommodation and resources, the department has successfully dealt with all of the issues highlighted in the last inspection report. When the new technology suite opens later this year, all the department's aims are likely to have been achieved. Overall, good progress has been made, particularly in terms of raising standards of attainment.

GEOGRAPHY

90. GCSE results in 2000 showed an improvement from 1999 but were still well below the national average. The pupils' results in geography were below the average of their results in other subjects.
91. Standards are well below average by the end of Year 9, but this represents an improvement from their attainment on entry to the school, when many pupils have limited geographical knowledge. Many pupils work well orally in all year groups at Key Stage 3, explaining and describing such phenomena as the way volcanoes affect the people living near them. Their knowledge of key vocabulary is good, taught through constant attention to regular reading and the use of glossaries. However, weaknesses in writing limit the progress of all but the most able. By the end of Year 9, the majority of pupils have a good knowledge of countries and continents and can read Ordnance Survey maps. However, their practical skills of observation and investigation are weak because these are not systematically taught. The high pupil turnover means that rates of progress are uneven.
92. Standards are also well below average by the end of Year 11. Work seen during the inspection, particularly in Year 10, shows a basic level of factual knowledge about geographical principles, such as the global distribution of rainforests, and reasons for urban renewal. Curiosity and analytical skills are weak, however, because much of the teaching is directed towards the acquisition of knowledge, with resources that depend heavily on textbooks, and there is little variety of teaching styles. For example, pupils studying urban renewal have no opportunity to investigate the development of actual city centres, and those studying rivers have not even been taken to look at the Thames and ask questions about the way people use the waterway. Some pupils have produced coursework studies of an average standard but the work of the majority is weak, with minimal information and no understanding of how to present hypotheses and conclusions.
93. Pupils with special educational needs are generally making satisfactory progress because of additional help from their teachers and worksheets designed to meet their needs. Pupils with English as an additional language make progress if they have reached a good standard in English but those with little English struggle to make sense of their lessons. More able pupils are given additional work in greater depth but their progress is not as good as it would be if they were taught to take responsibility for framing their own questions about the topics being studied.

94. The standard of teaching is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9, and good in Years 10 and 11. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen and one was very good. The best lesson, in Year 10, included well planned sequences of activities about tropical rainforests which combined discussion of the characteristics of the forest with exercises on defining key words, and a graph to show the coverage of rainforest in various countries. However, most lessons lacked any variety of activity or visual stimulation, particularly in Years 7 to 9, so that the pupils' enthusiasm was rarely ignited, which means that pupils do not make the progress of which many of them are capable. Progress was better in Years 10 and 11, where more variety was introduced in some lessons.
95. Homework is set regularly and is always relevant to the sequence of lessons. The regular assessment of pupils' progress is a strength. A range of strategies is used to raise GCSE attainment, such as extra revision and homework clubs, providing more structure for coursework and involving parents in making sure that work is completed. However, the head of department has not made a link between the importance of teaching practical skills in the earlier years and improved examination results at the end of Year 11.
96. Improvement since the 1996 inspection has been satisfactory, although much still needs to be done. As a result of the teachers' emphasis on the correct use of vocabulary and the development of language skills, pupils understand the textbooks better and learn more quickly. There has been an improvement in the quality of teaching, and pupils' motivation and behaviour are now both good. GCSE results have improved but are still low. There is still some underachievement because of a lack of challenge in some of the teaching, and the whole area of investigation, practical experience and independent work has received insufficient attention. There is now a system for monitoring teaching and pupils' work by the head of department but this has not yet been used effectively to identify the best teaching and learning and ensure that these become standard throughout the department. There is little planned use of computers. These last areas should be incorporated in a plan to continue to raise attainment.

HISTORY

97. The percentage of pupils who gained an A*-C grade at GCSE was well below the national average in 2000. This was an improvement from 1999 when no pupils gained an A*-C grade and much of the teaching was by temporary teachers. The overall trend is one of improvement.
98. In Years 7 to 9 standards are well below average, which represents an improvement on the very low attainment when pupils begin their history course in Year 7. Standards are improving because a new head of department is having a very positive effect on the pupils' enthusiasm and interest in the subject, through the introduction of imaginative teaching methods. For example, one Year 8 class acted out the trial and execution of Charles I, while another successfully analysed various sources of evidence to interpret the story of the Civil War siege of Brampton Castle. A range of strategies to improve literacy, combined with different worksheets targeted towards pupils of different abilities, is making it easier for pupils to present their work well.
99. In Year 11 attainment is also well below average. Pupils' progress is limited by a lack of the enthusiasm that marks lessons in other year groups. However, it is an improvement on the previous year's examination results, which were affected by two terms of supply teaching that led to much uncompleted coursework. Year 10 pupils are more interested and thus making better progress. They relished a lesson about the discovery of chloroform as part of the history of medicine, and their interest is likely to be supported by a planned visit to the "Old Operating Theatre" museum.
100. Across all the year groups, pupils show good understanding of cause and effect and how to assess historical evidence. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language take a full part in the drama and role-play sessions, thus developing their historical understanding. Weaknesses in writing limit the ability of some pupils to complete their written work. Able pupils are given additional work to do and the range of personal involvement through role-play extends all pupils' social development.
101. Teaching overall is good in both key stages. There was one unsatisfactory lesson where more attention was given to the process of drawing a graph than to making historical links. There was also one excellent lesson in Year 7, where the emotions and interest of the pupils were fully engaged through paired discussion and role-play about the dispute between Henry II and Thomas

à Becket. Pupils were swept into the story of religious and political conflict by enthusiastic and graphic teaching. Further strengths are high expectations, the setting of relevant homework and the very good management of the pupils' behaviour. The use of computers as a tool to support learning is under-developed.

102. Good progress has been made since the 1996 inspection. Teaching and learning are being closely monitored through lesson observation and work scrutiny but this has not yet brought all lessons up to the standard of the best. Schemes of work and a range of supporting documentation have been prepared. There are good procedures for assessing pupils' performance and for monitoring individual pupils. These have already resulted in a change of GCSE syllabus to one that will be more easily accessible to the pupils, and the provision of a more appropriate range of textbooks. The effect of good leadership in developing teaching styles is clear in the improved attainment and motivation of many classes, and in the pupils' improved historical understanding. Standards need to be raised further and the main areas now to be developed are more visits to places of historical interest for data gathering and observation, and the use of ICT as a tool for research and presentation.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

103. In the full GCSE, which was taken by almost half of the year group in 2000, the proportion of pupils gaining A*-C grades was slightly below the national average. In the short GCSE course, results were well below the national average.
104. All pupils are taught ICT skills throughout Key Stage 3 and all are able to follow an accredited course in Key Stage 4. In lessons observed, although there was a wide range of attainment between different sets at Key Stage 3, attainment overall was satisfactory. At Key Stage 4 there was again a very wide range but attainment overall was satisfactory. In some instances weaknesses in English language skills are adversely affecting the attainment of pupils, although ICT teachers work hard to help develop language skills and are supported in some lessons by specialist staff. In the top set in Year 11 attainment is very good and the pupils have developed a good understanding of the impact of ICT on business. In all years, pupils have a positive attitude towards their ICT work and they are making good progress. At Key Stages 3 and 4 pupils are able to use a range of software applications to present, exchange and share information, taking account of the needs of particular audiences. The use of spreadsheets and databases is developing well, particularly at Key Stage 4, for presenting and interpreting information. There is access to the Internet via the new computer network and all pupils are able to use it for research.
105. A new ICT co-ordinator has been in post since September. Schemes of work for ICT courses have been revised. Past performance has been analysed and used to inform planning. The stability in the staffing of ICT courses is now having a positive impact upon standards. Teaching in both key stages is good and often very good. Lessons are well planned with clear objectives. Classroom management is good and teachers use a variety of strategies to retain the pupils' attention and to maintain the pace of lessons. Good support is provided for individuals, including writing frames for coursework planning, and time is left to review work at the end of lessons.
106. Computers are used regularly in some subjects but their use, in general, is inconsistent. Some departments are not taking advantage of the knowledge and skills which pupils are developing in their ICT lessons. There is a programme of staff training but one of the computer networks is old and unable to use modern software, which some teachers find limiting. There are currently insufficient resources to ensure full coverage of the control aspect in design and technology and to provide enough opportunities for all pupils to use ICT to measure and record events in science. ICT teachers ensure that pupils have good access to computers at lunchtime and after school. Pupils are very keen to use the facilities particularly for ICT homework and GCSE coursework.
107. Since the last inspection there has been a good improvement in teaching. The concerns about the organisation, control and structure of lessons have been tackled. ICT courses are appropriately staffed and most aspects of ICT are covered appropriately. To improve standards further a more formal structure is needed to ensure that all subjects make appropriate use of computers to enhance learning. The use of ICT to measure, record, control and automate tasks needs to be developed further. Resources need to be improved to bring the number of modern computers to a more favourable level.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

108. All pupils in 2000 followed the short course French examination, with poor results. This can be attributed to a number of factors, mainly staff changes and a limiting teaching time of 50 minutes. Academically the short course is as demanding as the full course. Results in French at GCSE level since the last inspection show a downward trend. A small number of dedicated pupils were entered for the full course in 2000, of whom 60 per cent gained Grade C. Current Year 11 pupils study the short course and several will be entered for the full course examination.
109. Satisfactory progress is being made at Key Stage 3, but attainment overall is below average. In spoken French, most pupils are reluctant to use full sentences in answers and oral skills are limited. Teachers use a variety of strategies to elicit answers and in pair work pupils communicate more confidently. Pupils in a Year 7 French lesson on food were taught how to use the past tense, using the verb "boire." The sequencing of the lesson enabled pupils to use "J'ai bu" in context. Progress was evident. Answers were brisk and fluent, resulting in pupil satisfaction and the desire to learn more. Whilst pupils listen intently, the listening activities seen were very basic. In one lesson the involvement of the French 'Assistante' enabled the pupils to become accustomed to a different voice, thus broadening their experience. Attractive textbooks and readers provide opportunities for independent reading and teacher-produced worksheets allow pupils to work at their own pace. Written skills vary according to ability. The more able produce more detailed descriptive writing, including ideas and opinions. Pupils are being encouraged to present work using computers. Rapid progress was seen in a higher ability Year 9 group. The lesson was conducted in French, beginning with a review of key words and phrases, using an overhead projector. Help was gradually removed, so that pupils had to remember and think for themselves in order to answer. The pupils found the lesson enjoyable. The teacher elicited the meaning of words, by using alternatives, or words with similar meaning, which made the pupils reason.
110. At Key Stage 4, many Year 10 pupils have opted for French or for the newly introduced Spanish course. Pupils are responding to the high expectations of the teachers and the challenging work. Standards have improved from the previous low levels and are now below average overall. In Spanish the course is having to move at speed. Exercise books are proof of the high standards being achieved. In a Spanish lesson pupils were able to talk about weather, using the past and present tenses. Maps on the overhead projector reinforced the geographical location of towns and provided the opportunity to practise their names in Spanish. Good progress was made in a lower group short course Year 10 French lesson on shopping. The teacher skilfully used carefully prepared resources, which enabled the pupils to answer confidently. Pair work gave them the opportunity to work independently. By the end of the lesson, everyone had sufficient knowledge to complete for homework a sheet containing a variety of tasks. Year 11 pupils were observed to make satisfactory progress. Considering that few have been in this school for any length of time, they are now enjoying French. Their teachers are committed and encouraging. The support teacher was an asset and worked well with the teacher, by writing essential words and expressions required on the board, so the teacher could give full attention to the class.
111. Pupils enjoy language lessons. Setting enables lessons to be planned to suit the different ability levels. Most pupils work intently and with interest in a pleasant atmosphere. Pupils with special educational needs cope with their work, owing to good teaching and planning. Similarly, pupils with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress. Several pupils identified as being gifted and talented displayed good oral skills. Specific subject targets have been set to help them develop their linguistic talent.
112. Teaching overall was satisfactory. At Key Stage 3, all lessons were satisfactory, and half were good. At Key Stage 4, all lessons were satisfactory, with three-quarters good or better. Teachers are good role models in the use of the foreign language. This has the effect of making the pupils listen more intently. Good subject knowledge is shown and sound planning, with a variety of tasks, contributes to the interest of lessons. The good lessons run smoothly, showing good classroom management. Continuity has been hampered by the number of supply teachers. One post is currently filled by a supply teacher, but pupils are beginning to respond to her expectations. The school is fortunate to share a language 'assistante', which adds another perspective to language learning. The head of department has made a great impact on

languages, in a relatively short time. Much hard work has been done to produce a handbook, introduce a new course and to improve the profile and standards of the subject. Money is wisely spent and course books have been chosen in the best interest of the pupils. Homework is regularly set and consistently marked, with diagnostic comments. Language rooms are colourful and enhance the learning environment.

113. Monitoring teaching and the work of the department has resulted in good progress since the last inspection. Pupils are now well motivated and well behaved. This is in response to good teaching and to the pace and content of lessons. Pupils are now responding more confidently in the spoken language. A selection of textbooks and readers has been purchased and pupils are buying their own magazines. Written work is now more accurate, showing secure understanding of grammatical concepts. There are too few opportunities for the use of the spoken language, for example, through group work, surveys, presentations, recordings on tape and the use of routine classroom expressions by pupils.

MUSIC

114. The number of pupils entered for the GCSE examination in 2000 increased from previous years, and there was also an improvement in results. The small number of candidates entered for GCSE, however, make comparison with national figures invalid.
115. Standards in lessons in Years 7 and 8 are average, but those in Year 9 are below average. Since the last inspection there has been a succession of music teachers, which has had an adverse effect on standards and on the status of the department in general. This situation is in the process of being rectified by the present head of department. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 gain practical experience of the basic concepts through a well-planned series of modules devised by the teachers. Tasks set are achievable by all pupils, with plenty of opportunities for the more able pupils to develop their skills to a higher standard. The pupils enjoy the practical activities and participate willingly. Pupils in Year 7 eagerly tackled a task designed to demonstrate the complex rhythms found in African drumming. The singing of calypsos as part of a Caribbean module in Year 8 was impressive, with the pupils rising to the teacher's expectations of higher standards of performance. The majority of pupils in Year 9 also enjoy their lessons, but are having to cover the foundation work which usually takes place in Years 7 and 8; pupils still require the names of notes to be written underneath manuscript and they are uncertain of rhythmic notation. Unfortunately a small minority are disenchanted with the subject and disrupt the learning of others.
116. It was not possible to observe any Year 10 lessons, but standards of written work indicate that the pupils are achieving in line with expectations for this stage in their GCSE course. Standards in Year 11 are below average, and the pupils' work shows the results of the previous spasmodic teaching. Pupils are finding the listening work and composition particularly challenging, as there has been no systematic composing activity and little computer-based work. However, teachers are tackling this situation by offering the pupils numerous opportunities to make up for lost time through extra sessions during lunchtime, after school and during the holidays. These sessions are well attended.
117. Teaching at Key Stage 3 is generally good and some is very good. Both teachers are enthusiastic and have a very good knowledge of their subject, which they pass on to the pupils using a variety of strategies usually designed to enable the pupils to manage their own learning. Relationships with the pupils are very good, and the latter feel confident to make appropriate suggestions when rehearsing music. Teaching at Key Stage 4 is very good. Lessons are presented in a manner which keeps the pupils interested; this assists progress. Both teachers show good musicianship when demonstrating aspects of performing to give the pupils an idea of standards possible. However, homework is under-used for developing research skills and writing about music.
118. Since the last inspection most of the issues raised have been dealt with. Monitoring of the work of the department has contributed to the progress made. The department is now organised. Resources are much improved, although the present provision is still unsatisfactory and has an adverse effect on pupils' learning. The lack of sufficient computers, keyboards and instruments from other cultures is preventing the teachers from offering the pupils a broad music curriculum. The current curriculum is good for the present standards of music-making at Key Stage 3, but will

require evaluation and revision as the good teaching in Years 7 and 8 raises standards and expectations. To continue the work that has taken place in turning the department round, the results of assessments will need to be fully used to help pupils' progress. The use of computers and advanced keyboards early in the Key Stage 3 curriculum should be explored and developed. Homework should be set which develops the pupils' writing and research skills, thus enabling them to contribute more knowledgeably to their own learning.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

119. In the GCSE 2000 sports examination, the proportion of pupils gaining grades A*-C was well below the national average, but results in the higher grades were better than those achieved in previous years. The trend in results since the last inspection is in line with the national average.
120. Standards seen during the inspection at Key Stage 3 are average. Most pupils can plan and judge performance; they show satisfactory individual and team skills in games and understand basic fitness principles. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject are very good, which enables pupils to make considerable gains in their knowledge of technique, tactics, rules and fitness. This was very evident in a Year 9 health-related fitness lesson where the pupils made rapid progress in understanding the effects of exercise on the body, because the teacher provided opportunities for independent learning. Pupils planned warm-ups, measured pulse rates and plotted graphs from the readings. Lower-attaining pupils often achieve well, because teaching is adapted to meet their needs. Their main weaknesses are poor hand-eye co-ordination and lack of spatial awareness. Higher attainers in games use well-refined skills and tactics to consistently out-manoeuvre opponents; their learning is accelerated by extension tasks in lessons and through the opportunities provided by the good range of extra-curricular activities that are made available to all.
121. Standards at Key Stage 4 are average. Most pupils are tactically aware in games; for example, in Year 11 basketball pupils successfully used defensive systems to counter attackers. They understand the factors that constitute a healthy lifestyle and can judge performance and plan improvement. Lower attainers often display useful levels of individual technique but lack the necessary confidence and skill to reproduce them under the pressure of a match situation. Continuity and progress are good across both key stages, as a result of very good teaching. Tasks are adapted to challenge all pupils and often enable those with special educational needs to make more progress than might be expected; well-structured schemes of work build on previous learning. In a Year 11 trampolining lesson, all pupils accurately judged performance and most effectively planned improvements, due to the teacher's very good video support and provision of modified tasks for lower and higher attainers. Learning is not as effective in a few lessons, because of fewer opportunities for pupils to plan work. The teachers' management of pupils is very good overall and reflects good teacher-pupil relationships that are, in turn, conducive to good quality learning. The small numbers of Year 11 GCSE pupils are on target to achieve well below the national average at the end of Key Stage 4. Most have special educational needs (mainly for literacy) and although they develop in line with the majority in practical aspects, they underachieve in theory work because there is no learning support. Most pupils have good ICT skills because of opportunities in lessons to use the Internet, computer software and video camcorders. Higher-attainers, including the talented and gifted, understand and apply more advanced techniques. They achieve high standards at Key Stage 4 because

teachers set well-planned extension tasks and provide very good extra-curricular opportunities. In both key stages, very good opportunities are given for pupils to extend their key skills of literacy and numeracy.

122. The very good quality of teaching, in both key stages, is well supported by the good use of assessment to monitor the progress of individual pupils and teaching groups. Pupils are aware of the targets that they are set and these are constantly revised. Good use is made of assessment data to guide curricular planning; this was very evident when the department decided to change examination boards.
123. The department has made good improvement since the last inspection, partly as a result of the careful monitoring of its work and the observation of teaching. The overall quality of teaching and learning has improved from good to very good. Opportunities for pupils to develop independent

learning are now very good and assessment is now linked to the National Curriculum. The supply of textbooks is adequate and a National Lottery grant has been used to ensure that there is no shortage of gymnastics equipment. The indoor accommodation remains limited in size and scope. The school still has to use external facilities for games lessons, to supplement the school provision. The use of off-site playing fields limits learning opportunities because of the amount of time used for travelling. Teachers and club coaches continue to provide a good range of extra-curricular activities in which over a third of pupils participate. To improve standards further the school needs to extend its indoor physical education facilities, which restrict the scope of learning activities, and if possible improve its on-site outdoor facilities.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

124. Results in the full GCSE course were well below average in 2000. The 2000 results were lower than those in 1999, but significantly higher than those at the time of the last inspection. All pupils not following the full GCSE course take a short examination course and those results were also well below the national average. This course was not studied at the time of the last inspection.
125. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 3 is below the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils have a basic understanding of Christianity and a range of world religions, but those in the lower sets often confuse the practices of the different religions. Good teaching encourages the pupils to use the correct technical terminology and the relaxed learning environment allows pupils to contribute to the lessons with examples from their own experiences. A number of pupils are beginning to express their own views on issues and to understand how belief affects life-style. This was seen in a Year 9 class discussing how the parents' beliefs may affect the way that they raise their children. The pupils are supportive of each other, as seen when a pupil assisted another whilst reading out loud. Satisfactory progress can be seen in the key stage with a greater variety of styles of writing and presentation of ideas. Weaker aspects in the teaching are an occasional loss of pace and allowing some pupils to dominate the answering of questions.
126. Attainment is well below the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus at the end of Key Stage 4. Pupils in Year 11 are comparing religious ideas and considering moral issues. Currently teachers are supplementing the work of Year 11 pupils because of severe staffing difficulties over the past eighteen months. Year 11 have considerable gaps in their knowledge and find it difficult to apply what they know to wider situations. Pupils in Year 10 show a greater understanding of the issues and were able to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of arranged marriages in a sensitive and responsible manner. The respect shown by the pupils for each other's beliefs provides a stimulating learning environment and pupils' oral skills are developed as they are encouraged to present their views to the class whether a piece of prepared homework or the results of a group discussion in class. Low literacy levels hinder the progress of a few pupils.
127. Teaching is good: almost three-quarters of the lessons seen were at least good and none was unsatisfactory. There is no significant difference between the teaching in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. The impact of the staffing difficulties of last term were evident in the pupils' books, with the lower groups having less challenging work and work being left unmarked. This term staff have, to a large extent, tackled this problem so that there is no difference in the progress of different groups. Comments are written in the pupils' books but there is often a lack of a constructive comment so that the pupil has insufficient specific help as to how improvements could be made to his work. In both key stages homework is used effectively to extend the knowledge of the pupils and it then becomes an integral part of the next lesson.
128. The present head of department has been in post for only five weeks and during that time a dramatic change has been made to the learning environment: the area has been decorated and displays of the major world religions are used as a resource within lessons. The lively, positive approach to the subject has affected the attitudes of the pupils, so that they arrive ready to take part, are very keen to contribute and feel free to express their own beliefs and views. An evaluation of the department has been undertaken and a short-term development plan drawn up. A new assessment scheme is being introduced so that the department works with the National Curriculum levels used in other subjects.
129. There has been good progress since the last inspection, when the department had many severe problems. There has been considerable turnover of staff, but present arrangements are producing

much good teaching. An examination course is now available for all pupils. Standards are gradually improving, especially in the use of religious vocabulary and the pupils' oral expression of ideas. The attitude of pupils to the subject has changed dramatically from very poor to good. The resources are being built up and those in use are now suitable to challenge the pupils. However, more resources are needed to provide for a wider range of methods to be used and more research opportunities to be offered to the pupils. In order to improve further the department needs to follow through the initiatives started and find more ways of incorporating opportunities to use computers in lessons.