

INSPECTION REPORT

THE ROYAL DOCKS COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Custom House London

LEA area: Newham

Unique reference number: 131929

Headteacher: Ms Patricia Bagshaw

Reporting inspector: Akram Khan OBE
OFSTED Inspector No. 27296

Dates of inspection: 19 - 22 March 2001

Inspection number: 230026

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11-16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Prince Regent Lane Custom House LONDON
Postcode:	E16 3HS
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Councillor Neil J Wilson
Date of previous inspection:	N/A

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
27296	Akram Khan OBE	Registered inspector		What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well pupils are taught? How well is the school led and managed? What the school should do to improve?
14347	Joan Lindsay	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development, attendance, care, guidance and pupils' welfare, partnership with parents.
11672	Peter Harle	Team inspector	Music	
20055	Sheila Entwistle	Team inspector	Mathematics	Numeracy across curriculum, quality of teaching.
23880	Olivia Hall	Team inspector	Special educational needs	
2183	Dr. Peter Thompson	Team inspector	Information and communications technology	
4372	Ralph Fordham	Team inspector	Religious education	Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
10561	Angela Fraser	Team inspector	Science	Staffing
20412	Diane Shepherd	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
13217	Malcolm Butterworth	Team inspector	Physical education	
1994	Helen Olds	Team inspector	Geography	Learning resources
20877	David Pink	Team inspector	History	Assessment
2866	Bob Battey	Team inspector	Art and design	Accommodation
8390	Dr. Richard Andersen	Team inspector	English, drama	Literacy across curriculum, English as an additional language.
1990	Graham Preston	Team inspector	Design and technology	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
10666	Patricia Wheeler	Team inspector	General national, vocational qualification	Careers, extra-curricular activities

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is a co-educational comprehensive school, educating pupils from the ages of 11 to 16. There are 1202 pupils on roll making it slightly larger than other comprehensive schools. The percentage (46 per cent) of pupils known to be eligible for free meals is much higher than the national average. Pupil turnover is high compared with that found in similar schools. The percentage of pupils speaking English as an additional language is significantly higher than in most schools. Overall attainment on entry is well below average. One hundred and four pupils have statements of special educational needs and 37 per cent of pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs (SEN). Both figures are very high in comparison with national averages. 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 provides satisfactory standards of education in relation to the prior attainment of pupils. It has a strong commitment to social inclusion and the resourced provision for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) and community education extends the inclusive nature of the school. Pupils' attainment at the age of 14 and GCSE results are well below the national average and this reflects the attainment of pupils on entry to the school. Teaching is good, overall, and all staff work hard to ensure that pupils learn effectively. The management by the headteacher is very good and there is some good leadership of individual departments. The school is aware of its strengths and weaknesses, though monitoring and evaluation procedures are not yet effective enough. Pastoral care is very good and provision for special needs pupils is effective. Given the standards achieved, the scale of learning needs the school has and the quality of good teaching, the school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Highly effective and purposeful leadership of the headteacher. The senior management team, staff and governors have a strong commitment to raising pupils' attainment.
- Effective and efficient use of learning resources including use of specific grants.
- Excellent integration of **all** pupils with an extensive range of learning opportunities. Very good provision for extra-curricular sport, music and drama, which are well supported by pupils.
- The quality and range of provision for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties.
- Excellent links with local primary and higher education colleges. Good provision for careers education.
- Supportive and caring environment, harmonious relationships at all levels.

What could be improved

- Pupils' attainment throughout the school.
- The curriculum offered in religious education and information and communications technology in Years 10 and 11 so that the school meets statutory requirements.
- Attendance and the high rates of unauthorised absence.
- Links with parents and the quality of information provided for parents, particularly about pupils' progress.
- Monitoring and evaluation by the senior management.
- More active involvement of the governing body in the work of the school and the statutory information provided for parents.
- Match of staff to curricular requirements.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

This is the first inspection of the new Royal Docks Community School, which opened in September 1999. Policies and procedures have been established and daily organisational arrangements are effective and efficient. The senior management team and the school's governors have worked effectively with staff to provide good quality education and the school has made good progress since its start. Their efforts, however, have been hampered by a shortage of teaching staff in some key subjects. A well-co-ordinated and structured personal, social and health education programme broadens the educational opportunities for most pupils. Much thought has been given to assessment but there are still weaknesses and inconsistencies across subjects. Development planning requires precision and clearly agreed priorities. Procedures are not well developed for monitoring, evaluating and challenging the

work of all subject departments. Financial control is first rate and there is careful management of finances and external grants. Systems and structures are good and the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 16 year olds based on average point scores in GCSE.

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
GCSE examinations	NA	NA	E	D	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E

Results in the National Curriculum tests for fourteen-year-olds show attainment to be well below national averages but commensurate with the pupils' prior attainment on entry to the school. In 2000, results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 were well below the national average in mathematics and very low in English and science. In comparison with similar schools pupils' performance was well below average in mathematics and very low in English and science. In 2000, the proportion of pupils gaining five or more passes at the higher grades A*-C in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) and General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) examinations was well below the national average and the proportion of pupils gaining grades in the A*-G range was below the national average. The average total point scores per pupil were well below the national average. The proportion of pupils achieving five or more GCSE/GNVQ A*-C grades was below the national average in comparison with schools with similar socio-economic characteristics but the proportions were above the averages for pupils achieving A*-G and one or more grades A*-G. Results in drama are close to the national average. Pupils have achieved less well in mathematics, art, history, geography, English literature and their results have been poor in religious education, physical education, French and German. Inspection findings are that standards of achievement are in line with national expectations in art and design, drama, information and communications technology (ICT), physical education and music throughout the school. Pupils' attainment is well below national expectations in mathematics, science, design and technology, history and modern foreign languages in Years 7-11 and in mathematics in Years 10 and 11. Their attainment is below average in geography and religious education but well below national expectations in English, science, design and technology, history in Years 7-11, mathematics in Years 7-9 and art and design and GNVQ subjects in Years 10 and 11. Although realistic targets have been set for years 2001-2, they are demanding enough. Extra-curricular sports, music and drama contribute a great deal to pupils' personal development.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Most pupils like the school and have very positive attitudes to learning. A small number of pupils in each year are not sufficiently motivated.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The behaviour of most pupils is good in most lessons and around the school. Challenging behaviour of a few adversely affects the learning in a few lessons.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils take advantage of mixed-aged tutor groups and enjoy harmonious and supportive relationships. They exercise responsibility through, for example, the School Council and extra-curricular sports, music and drama.
Attendance	Attendance rates are below the national average. There is a high level of unauthorised absence.

A strength of the school lies in the inclusive nature of its provision. The school encourages all pupils to respect each other and all staff. Most respond well making the school a good place for learning. Fixed-term exclusion rates are high.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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.

Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Teaching was satisfactory or better in 97 per cent of lessons observed: it was good in 42 per cent, very good in 26 per cent and excellent in a further three per cent of lessons. It was judged to be unsatisfactory in three per cent of lessons. Teaching makes a major contribution to effective learning and pupils make satisfactory progress as a result. It is good in all years. In most lessons teachers' very good subject knowledge and enthusiasm lead pupils to learn at a good rate. In very good and excellent lessons teachers adopt varied and interesting methods to encourage thinking and consolidate pupils' understanding. Teachers' use of the interactive electronic board significantly enhances teaching and learning. The quality of teaching is good in English and mathematics and satisfactory in science. Good teaching was seen in all subjects except science and modern foreign languages, where it was satisfactory. Only six unsatisfactory lessons were seen and those contributed to unsatisfactory progress. Planning for pupils with special educational needs is very good; they learn well in all subjects. The strategies for the teaching of literacy and numeracy skills are good but these are not consistently applied across subjects. Staffing difficulties such as the shortage of suitably qualified teachers inhibits pupils' progress and attainment.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum in Years 7-9 and an extensive range of courses in Years 10 and 11. Statutory requirements in respect of religious education and information and communications technology are not met in Years 10 and 11.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The quality of provision is good. There are effective procedures for the identification of pupils with special education needs. Targets in individual plans are precise and review procedures are good.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language.	Considering the high proportion of pupils with English as additional language, the school's provision is inadequate. However, it makes the best provision it can while working with limited resources.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good. Pupils' cultural development is good and spiritual development is satisfactory. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme contributes strongly to moral and social development but opportunities for pupils' to reflect are limited.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides a safe environment and the quality of pastoral support is very good. The school has good systems for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic and personal development.

The school provides a wide range of GNVQ courses. Insufficient time allocation in ICT and design and technology reduces coverage of some aspects of programmes of study and inhibits sufficient and planned development of knowledge and skills. Gifted and talented pupils benefit from many additional activities with other schools, such as master classes in English, mathematics and science and intensive dance training. School assemblies do not make a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual development.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher, well supported by the senior management team, provides clear and highly effective leadership. Subject and key stage co-ordinators generally provide good leadership. The leadership of SEN is very effective.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are well informed and are very supportive of the school. They need to be more involved in strategic planning and evaluating the impact of their decisions on standards.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher, senior management team and governors have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They need to be more rigorous in monitoring and challenging the work of the departments.
The strategic use of resources	The school's development plan provides a clear framework for spending priorities. Valuable support is provided by learning support assistants and non-teaching staff.

Great care is taken over financial planning. External grants and limited resources are used efficiently.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school expects their children to work hard and achieve their best. • The school is approachable. • Teaching is good. • Their children like coming to the school. • The progress their children are making in the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework and consistency of marking. • The way the school works closely with parents. • Behaviour and disruption in some lessons.

Inspectors agree with the positive views of parents. Inspectors found that homework is not always set in most subjects. The school organises after-school homework clubs but not all teachers set homework according to the agreed timetable and set tasks do not always provide sufficient extension to the pupils' learning. Systems are in place to monitor and promote good behaviour although a few incidents of unacceptable behaviour were seen. Relationships at all levels are good. Formal systems for providing information for parents are satisfactory though planners are not universally well used. The range of extra-curricular activities is very good and much appreciated by many pupils. There is no Parents Teachers Association though parents are well represented on the governing body. The senior managers and the school's governors are keen to strengthen further this partnership to enable pupils to benefit from the educational opportunities that are offered.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The attainment of the vast majority of pupils on entry to the school is well below the national average. Standardised reading, the NFER Cognitive Abilities Tests and the National Curriculum test results in English, mathematics and science for 11 year olds confirm this. A significant proportion of pupils on entry have basic literacy skills that are low for their age. For example, over 34 per cent of the pupils have reading ages that are two years behind their chronological age. There is a high number of pupils, currently 104, with statements of special educational needs. The percentage of pupils, 37 per cent, on the school's register of special educational needs (SEN), is very high in comparison with the national average. The pupils having the highest level of need have profound multiple, severe and moderate learning difficulties, emotional and behavioural problems; speech and communication and physical and hearing impairment. The percentage of pupils speaking English as an additional language is higher than in most schools. There is significant improvement in the pupils' ability profile in the present Year 7 and their attainment in Year 6 tests is close to the national average. The school has a strong inclusive ethos and is developing appropriate strategies to help all these pupils, many of whom receive extra help from class teachers and classroom assistants.
2. Results in the National Curriculum tests for 14 year olds show attainment well below national averages but commensurate with pupils' prior attainment on entry to the school. In 2000, results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 were well below the national average in mathematics and very low in English and science. In comparison with similar schools pupils' performance was well below average in mathematics and very low in English and science. In English, boys performed slightly better than girls, which was against the national pattern. In science and mathematics there were no significant differences between the performance of boys and girls or between pupils from minority ethnic groups and other pupils.
3. In 2000, the proportion of pupils gaining five or more passes at the higher grades A*-C in the school's first General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) and General National and Vocational Qualifications (GNVQ) examinations was well below the national average and the proportion gaining A*-G grades was below the national average. The average total point scores per pupil were well below the national average. The proportion of pupils achieving five or more GCSE/GNVQ grades in the A*-C was below the national average in comparison with schools with similar socio-economic characteristics but the proportions were above the averages for pupils achieving A*-G and one or more grades A*-G. Pupils who obtained an GNVQ intermediate grade, equivalent to two GCSE grades A*-C, did better on their GNVQ course than in most of their other GCSE subjects. All pupils who completed the health and social care course obtained the Basic Food Hygiene Certificate and completed a St John's Ambulance First Aid course. Pupils of Chinese heritage achieved better results than other ethnic groups, though there was no significant difference in the performance of pupils from other ethnic groups and indigenous white pupils. Girls, in line with national trends, outperformed boys. Results in drama are close to the national average. Pupils have achieved less well in mathematics, art, history, geography, English literature and their results have been poor in religious education, physical education, French and German. In line with the school's policy for 'Gifted and Talented' a small number of pupils (one in French and 18 in physical education) was entered for GCSE examinations at the end of Year 10. Though these results are not included in the above data, one pupil achieved grade B in French and eight pupils achieved GCSE grades A*-C in physical education. At the end of Year 11, two pupils took Advanced level supplementary examinations and achieved A and B in French and A and E in German.
4. At the end of Year 9, the standards of achievement, as judged from lessons observed during the inspection and in an analysis of pupils' work, are in line with national expectations in art and design, drama, information and communications technology, physical education and music. Their attainment is below the national expectations in mathematics, geography and religious education but well below the national expectations in English, science, design and technology, history and modern foreign languages. Inspection findings indicate that at the end of Year 11, pupils' attainment is in line with the national expectations in drama, information and communications technology, physical education and music, below average in art and design, geography, religious

education and G N V Q subjects and well below average in all other subjects of the National Curriculum.

5. Pupils with special education needs make satisfactory progress overall in relation to their prior attainment. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 who have poor reading skills make very good progress in the reading recovery programme which is designed around the use of phonics, comprehension, scanning and spelling. The progress of pupils who are profoundly deaf and those with partial hearing is good. For example, in a Year 11 withdrawal group discussing issues surrounding deaf awareness using signing, pupils show a good standard of critical insight and gains in confidence. Younger pupils withdrawn from languages for additional literacy support make good progress in managing their own work and in extending their vocabulary through spelling and reading. In mainstream lessons the majority of pupils is successfully integrated. They receive effective help and encouragement from teachers and the learning support team, they improve their skills and understanding and their achievement is similar to other average attaining pupils. In modern foreign languages, work is not sufficiently planned to meet the needs of low attaining pupils. Pupils with individual education plans make satisfactory progress towards their set targets, but many pupils do not always know their targets and as a result they are less engaged in fulfilling them. Older pupils make satisfactory progress in the use of information and communications technology to improve their coursework and in withdrawal groups for literacy support and life skills courses.
6. The gifted, talented and more able pupils are achieving national average standards and a few are achieving above. Since December 1999, the school has identified its more able pupils and is providing opportunities to extend such pupils. In history, modern foreign languages and physical education, for example, high attaining pupils are set extension work and in music able musicians benefit from instrumental tuition and extra-curricular activities. There are promising developments such as interactive computer programmes to develop thinking skills and the setting up of the "Master Classes" in English, mathematics and science and intensive dance training. There is a need to monitor, evaluate and promote further these positive developments, including raising parental expectations of their children's potential in order to maximise the achievement of able pupils.
7. In English, in Years 7-9, most pupils listen well and speak fluently and can use their ideas with some elaboration, though sometimes they lack the precise vocabulary to make themselves clear in formal situations. They read aloud competently and convey meaning, but reading often lacks expression. The great majority takes care over writing. The best creative and imaginative work in all Years is well sustained, and higher-attaining pupils write confidently. The linguistic needs of pupils with English as an additional language are well met in 'partnership' teaching where this is possible, but elsewhere such pupils are frequently held back by their lack of vocabulary and idiom rather than by their understanding. In Years 10 and 11, most pupils explain their work clearly and often readily contribute ideas in class. Pupils' reading aloud improves and their levels of understanding are appropriate for their age. Those doing media studies develop the skill of 'reading' images satisfactorily, but the majority in a Year 11 class found connotation and discrimination difficult. Standards in writing vary greatly. A small minority writes competently, showing good understanding and satisfactory responses to texts but most pupils find structuring their work difficult. Inexperience in language is occasionally evident in the writing of a few pupils with English as a second language, but otherwise they cope well.
8. Effective strategies are beginning to raise standards of literacy in most subjects. Most pupils listen attentively with concentration and understanding to each other and their teachers. In most lessons, pupils express their viewpoints clearly, having a reasonable command of standard spoken English. Pupil representatives from all Year groups were articulate and confident in conversations with the inspectors. There are opportunities to develop reading skills in some subjects though the practice is not consistent. Pupils' levels of reading allow the great majority to have full access to the curriculum. Most departments support the extension of vocabulary, together with accuracy of spelling, by displaying list of words and terminology in their subjects but the accuracy and structure of most pupils' writing are below national expectations.
9. By the age of 14, most pupils use various methods to represent data, solve equations, understand the relationship between fractions, decimals and percentages and can find the area and volume of cubes and cuboids but they lack basic skills and some average and below average pupils cannot apply these concepts to solve simple everyday problems. In Years 10 and 11, high attaining pupils can sketch the graphs of functions derived from other functions, mean and standard deviation, vectors, probability and tree diagrams, and circle geometry. Lower and average attaining

pupils are beginning to explore patterns and notice generalizations but their numeracy skills are weak and they need considerable support to make progress.

10. Numeracy skills are used in a few subjects apart from mathematics. In physical education they use mental arithmetic skills satisfactorily to work out fitness levels and count pulse rates. In science, pupils use numeracy skills to measure lengths in metric units in Years 7-9 but they use graphical representation more rarely than could be expected. Accuracy in measurement is enhanced in design and technology. In music lessons numeracy skills are used effectively to enhance pupils' understanding of octaves. There is, however, insufficient support for numeracy from many subjects across the curriculum.
11. In science throughout the school, high attaining pupils and a few average attaining pupils show sound knowledge and understanding across all Programmes of Study and demonstrate accurate use of scientific ideas such as the ecosystems, earth science, energy resources, light and sound energy, reproduction, food chains and factors affecting rates of chemical reaction. Most pupils show confidence in setting up experiments, making observations and recording results but standards of scientific enquiry are below average. Pupils are beginning to use good practical experiences to understand scientific concepts and to consider the importance of planning and evaluating evidence. Lower attaining pupils in Years 7-11 enjoy practical tasks but are less secure in their understanding of scientific ideas.
12. In Years 7-9, most pupils in art and design experiment with visual images in their sketchbooks and by the end of Year 9 they show a very good appreciation of and interpretation of the style of the artist they are studying and apply the techniques of colour mixing and application to their own work. In Years 10 and 11, most pupils have good knowledge of the work of the artists they study. They use this knowledge to develop successfully the design and composition elements of their work.
13. In design and technology, most pupils in Years 7-9 demonstrate strong making skills when compared with their designs and other written folder work. They show satisfactory knowledge and understanding of different processes and techniques and are able to use tools with some accuracy to cut, shape and join different materials. However, in general, pupils have a limited awareness of designing and making processes. In Years 10 and 11, the higher attaining pupils demonstrate good research skills with an increasing use of Internet resources. In graphic products, for example, they present their design ideas well. Pupils are less able to articulate a design and make process, which in part is related to weaker than average literacy skills.
14. In geography, pupils in Year 9 show good understanding of the tropical rain forest and in Year 8 can describe clearly the effects of the Kobi earthquake. In Years 10 and 11, they can explain the changes in the Brazilian rain forest and understand the reasons for the decline in the coal industry and the changing employment patterns arising from foreign investment into the manufacturing industries. The lower attaining pupils use basic geographical skills satisfactorily.
15. Standards of achievement in history in Years 7-9, are below the expectations of pupils of a similar age. Year 7 pupils can identify some of the causes of the English Civil War and can arrange these causes in an order of importance. By the age of 14, pupils recognise that the stereotypical images of people connected with the Holocaust can be misleading. By the age of 16, standards of achievement are still below average. Higher attaining pupils can identify some of the reasons why Hitler managed to gain control in Germany in the 1930s and they begin to understand the use of propaganda through control of the press and at mass rallies.
16. In information and communications technology (ICT), most pupils in Years 7-9 can log-on to the network and access appropriate applications. Most pupils can use word processors, spreadsheets, databases, graphics and desktop publishing. They begin to access the Internet and e-mail but more work is needed in these areas to prepare pupils more adequately to undertake research in later years. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 have unsatisfactory opportunities to learn how to use information and communications technology in other GCSE subjects. Whilst many of the applications in design and technology, humanities, mathematics, music and science are good, they are largely as a result of the interest and at the discretion of individual teachers and pupils and do not universally cover the national requirements in information and communications technology.

17. In modern foreign languages, at age 14, standards in listening, speaking, reading and writing are below average. Higher attaining pupils include the use of the past tense in their writing, but in general progress in writing is slow. Inspection evidence indicates that higher attaining pupils studying French in Years 10 and 11 express themselves well in writing, though writing skills are less well developed in German. Pupils lack confidence in speaking, which does not feature significantly in most lessons. Reading material is very limited and listening material is not always appropriately linked to ability.
18. Inspection evidence confirms that pupils' attainment in music is in line with expectations. Most pupils in Years 9, 10 and 11 can use a computer based sequencing programme very effectively and improvise melodies against pre-recorded material. A younger pop-style group in Year 8, gave its first public, stylistically appropriate performance during the week of inspection to an audience of Year 7 pupils and teachers. Year 10 and 11 pupils can compose multi-layered pieces using cross rhythms and sequences of chords and discords to create effective pieces of music.
19. In Years 7-9, practical attainment in physical education is at least in line with national expectations. Year 8 boys and girls show satisfactory levels of skill in hockey and netball respectively. Younger boys in Year 7 make good progress in developing the lay-up shot and refine passing skills in basketball. Girls show satisfactory passing skills in both netball and soccer but often lack timing and awareness about how to move off the ball. When involved in warming-up the great majority of pupils shows understanding of the muscle groups involved in movements. However, their knowledge about the effects of exercise on the cardio-vascular system is not so well developed.
20. Pupils' attainment in religious education in Years 7 - 9 is in line with expectations for 14-year olds and their knowledge and understanding of religious principles are developing satisfactorily. In Years 10 and 11, pupils' attainment is lower than expected, especially in Year 11. Pupils in Year 11 demonstrate knowledge of the five pillars of Islam but there is little evidence of critical analysis. In Year 10, progress is much better and most pupils are beginning to consolidate their learning and develop values.
21. In work seen in the three intermediate part 1 GNVQ subjects, standards are below the national expectation. The majority of pupils, however, can use a variety of sources and produce coursework portfolios with researched assignments making good use of ICT. While description and presentation of data are generally satisfactory, most pupils find difficulty in writing at length. Lower attaining pupils and those with English as an additional language have poor spelling and sentence construction is weak. Only a limited amount of extended analysis and critical evaluation was seen even from higher attaining pupils.
22. Since September 1999, the new school has taken positive actions to raise pupils' standards and achievement, including a strong commitment to inclusive education, involvement in literacy and numeracy initiatives in Years 7-9 and in-service training on effective teaching. The use of interactive electronic white-boards have greatly enhanced teaching and learning in many subjects. Value added analysis and whole-school target setting is beginning in all years. There has been emphasis on data collection and interpretation. Improved resource provision and professional development have contributed to raising staff awareness of the link between effective teaching and pupils' attainment and progress. Pupils are given opportunities to consult teachers and the school employs a number of learning mentors and support workers who are effective in supporting many pupils. The work done with gifted and talented pupils is beginning to have a positive impact on the learning experiences of many pupils. Standards, however, remain uneven across the subjects.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

23. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, have good attitudes towards their work. The majority of pupils settles at the beginning of the lesson. They are generally good listeners and follow carefully their teachers' instructions and directions. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in mainstream lessons and in withdrawn groups, are co-operative and confident and respond well to challenging and enjoyable activities. In mixed-aged (vertical) tutor groups, the older pupils set a good example to the younger ones. A high percentage of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire stated that their children liked coming to school. This is reflected in the good levels of enthusiasm pupils show for their lessons and the way they approach practical work - for example in food technology, where they readily involve

themselves in making and collaborating. In the best lessons, pupils are keen and eager to acquire new knowledge and contribute constructively to the lessons. They persist with the tasks that are difficult, particularly when the teachers provide them with opportunities to use their knowledge and understanding to discover relationships between their own knowledge and the topic being studied. Pupils in a Year 9 physical education lesson were seen to work hard during a netball skills lesson and were eager to improve their technique. Pupils are enthusiastic about the extra-curricular activities and many are actively involved in the great variety of clubs on offer. They are also prepared to demonstrate their skills such as break-dancing and singing to others during assembly.

24. The school operates as an orderly place for learning. Behaviour in and around the school is good. A minority of pupils causes disruption in class, especially where the teacher's management of the class is not effective. However, where behaviour strategies are used well, pupils respond positively. They are aware of the rewards and sanctions that are part of the school's behaviour policy and generally staff applies these consistently. The pupils understand the harm bullying or racism in any form causes to a person. Pupils who were spoken to both formally and informally during the inspection stated that incidents of bullying and intimidation do occur in school but they were very confident that staff when informed would resolve the situation firmly and fairly. There is a high level of adult supervision in school during the morning and lunchtime breaks and this leads to a relatively calm atmosphere at those times even though pupils are allowed to remain in the building.
25. The school has a relatively high number of temporary exclusions, particularly amongst the boys. This is monitored closely in respect of the gender and ethnic origin of pupils involved. A high number of those who are excluded are isolated cases and the school considers a short exclusion to be an effective sanction in such situations. There were only two permanent exclusions during the last reported year, which is low for the size of the school. The home-school agreement provides a good reminder for those whose behaviour occasionally falls below the standard expected of all.
26. Good relationships are evident throughout the school and at all levels, among adults and pupils. As a result, most teachers have an effective rapport with their pupils that leads to a good level of mutual respect. Pupils are encouraged to show respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others through many aspects of school life. In lessons they listen very well to each other when, for example, they take turns to read aloud extracts from a novel. They also work well together in pairs or in larger groups, sharing tasks and collaborating successfully such as in finding meanings for "command" words in an examination preparation lesson in Years 10 and 11. The work seen for personal, social and health education shows that pupils are aware of the impact of their actions on others, and, for example, in Years 10 and 11, they look specifically at having respect for the beliefs of others. In Year 7, pupils are currently looking at the effects of bullying on both the victim and the perpetrator. The school works very hard to be socially inclusive and the success of the policy is seen in the way pupils respect each other regardless of race, background or gender. During the inspection, there was no evidence of any racism and pupils reported that staff handle the rare incidents that do occur swiftly and appropriately. Pupils organise collections and contribute well to charities.
27. The extent to which pupils show initiative and take responsibility is good. Pupils are given responsible roles in the school, such as Year 8 pupils staffing the reception desk on a rota basis, representing their Year group on the school council and assisting in the library. They also show initiative in class- for example, in music and in the work done for GNVQ courses, where independent learning is encouraged.
28. The personal development of pupils is also good. It is enhanced by many aspects of school life but especially through the programme of work in personal, social and health education and through the range of visitors to the school such as drugs education agencies. Visits made out of school to, for example, the Millennium Dome, museums and historic sites, as well as residential visits abroad, also enhance the personal development of pupils. Participation in specific projects such as one undertaken by a group of design and technology pupils to research and design an outfit for a fashion chain do much to raise the confidence and self-esteem of those involved.
29. The school's attendance rate is below the national average overall and the rate of unauthorised absence is a cause for concern, particularly in Years 10 and 11, where low levels of attendance are having an impact on standards. The system of registration is fully computerised and registers

are taken at each lesson but there are weaknesses in the system as pupils are often withdrawn for additional support or educated off-site on certain days of the week, making it more difficult to be certain of the whereabouts of some pupils. There is a certain amount of parental collusion affecting the unauthorised absence rate but the school is trying to tackle this through reminders in newsletters and specific letters to parents who request holidays during term time. Punctuality is satisfactory overall, although there are some persistent latecomers who are monitored by the school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

30. The quality of teaching is good overall, throughout Years 7-11. In 97 per cent of lessons observed teaching was satisfactory or better: it was good in 42 per cent, very good in 26 per cent and excellent in three per cent. Teaching was predominantly very good in art and design, General National Vocational Qualification courses, music throughout the school, in design and technology in Years 10 and 11 and information and communications technology in Years 7-9. It was good in English and mathematics, PSHE and other subjects of the National Curriculum except science and modern foreign languages, where it was judged as satisfactory. In the very good and excellent lessons, as, for example, in music, drama and information and communications technology, the enthusiasm and commitment of teachers are communicated to pupils who respond with heightened motivation, which enables them to learn effectively and make rapid gains in knowledge, understanding and skills. In satisfactory lessons teaching promoted sound learning and in good or very good lessons teaching had a marked effect on pupils' attainment and progress. Only six (three per cent), ineffective lessons were seen, mostly in Years 7-9 where it affected pupils' learning and their progress was impeded as a result.
31. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of their subjects is a strength and they use this to plan lessons effectively and present work clearly. For example, in English, teachers use their very good knowledge and understanding to plan and teach lessons which are usually interesting and which provide good challenge at several levels. In drama, teachers' knowledge develops pupils for practical work, with a good grasp of technical terms. In Years 7-9, mathematics teachers make good use of the National Numeracy Strategy to structure their lessons, which helps all pupils to consolidate learning, particularly their mental arithmetic skills. In science, teachers give clear and confident demonstrations, which enable pupils to understand and apply techniques for themselves. In art and design, teachers use the work of a wide range of artists, enabling pupils to evaluate and analyse various artistic styles. In design and technology, teachers have wider than usual knowledge and understanding of different strands, which help them to teach a number of specialist areas. Pupils in a Year 9 geography lesson empathized very well with the difficulties of survival in a tropical rain forest and in Year 10 they were challenged to prepare power point presentations on the impact of change in the Amazon Forest. Pupils in history handle sensitive issues, like the Holocaust, effectively so that they are encouraged to challenge stereotypes and reflect on their feelings towards events. In music confident teachers' expositions and effective strategies ensure that pupils' grasp of musical concepts is secure. There is growing emphasis in some subjects on the effective use of language in the development of conceptual understanding. In modern foreign languages, the best lessons have a range of activities which provide good opportunities for listening, speaking, reading and writing but more generally not enough use is made of French and German as the means of communication to reinforce learning, challenge higher attainers and developing pupils' listening skills.
32. Lesson planning is good overall and in the vast majority of lessons activities are appropriate and well sequenced to ensure that pupils build successfully on previous learning and to challenge effectively higher attaining pupils. In English and PSHE, teachers make good use of learning objectives to measure progress at the end of lessons. In mathematics, work is carefully matched to pupils' prior attainment and challenging investigations are set to extend high attaining pupils and support low attainers. Some of the mathematical investigations attempted in Year 11 are well matched to extend the 'Gifted and Talented' pupils. In a Year 11 lesson, the science teacher collaborated effectively with a specialist support teacher to enable hearing-impaired pupils to make good gain in scientific knowledge and understanding by accessing Internet facilities. In some instances, however, lesson planning does not focus sufficiently on the prior attainment of individual pupils so that not all pupils are challenged appropriately.
33. Teachers make good use of time and resources and lessons are usually conducted at a brisk pace to achieve objectives. The use of electronic interactive white-boards in many lessons greatly

enhances learning and pace. The use of ICT makes a significant contribution in mathematics to support pupils in Years 7 and 8, following the "Future School" scheme. In history artefacts are used effectively to stimulate interest and discussion and in art and design sketchbooks are used to support evaluation and progression of pupils' work. The use of ICT in music is an important element in stimulating pupils' interest and subsequent success. In some effective lessons in design and technology, information and communications technology facilities are well used to explore different design ideas and demonstrate computer-aided manufacture. In religious education, the effective use of video and textbooks enables teachers to match teaching to effective learning. In information and communications technology, effective use of CD-Roms and Internet facilities give access to a wide range of good quality information. In physical education, the interactive board is used effectively in teaching theory work. However, in some lessons resources are not always adapted adequately to meet the needs of all pupils, particularly the lower attainers and pupils with special educational needs. In science very good use is made of time so that teachers are able to summarise what has been learned at the end of each lesson and prepare pupils for the next lesson.

34. In the most effective lessons teachers use a good variety of strategies to promote learning and maintain interest. For example, in science and mathematics, pupils are given frequent opportunities to work independently or in pairs on extended investigation and gain confidence to plan and evaluate their work. In physical education, pupils are encouraged to research and present their projects. Pupils learn music by listening and analysis, by experiment and by skill development. In religious education, teachers ask searching question to review previous work and to consolidate understanding. However in a few lessons, in most subjects, teachers direct activities and this decreases opportunities for pupils to work independently, engage in discussion or explore issues for themselves and sometimes slows the pace.
35. In some subjects, teachers encourage the development of basic skills and practise new techniques to acquire knowledge and understanding of concepts and ideas. In history and PSHE in all years considerable attention is given to the teaching of literacy skills, which pupils use effectively to structure their writing so that they express and develop their ideas. In geography, pupils draft and redraft their information into successful individual and extended written work. Many mathematics lessons begin with practice in numeracy skills; this provides a good stimulus to learning, ensures that the pupils are quickly involved in the lesson, provides an opportunity for competition in the speed of answering and develops the pupils' basic skills well. In less successful lessons, ideas and concepts are not discussed and there are infrequent opportunities to write extended accounts of pupils' personal experiences.
36. Teachers have good control and management skills and good relationships with pupils and in the vast majority of lessons this ensures a purposeful and effective atmosphere for learning. In English, drama, music and physical education, teachers work hard to build constructive relationships with their pupils so that they can learn in a supportive environment. Control is less secure where teacher-led activities are lengthy, requiring pupils to listen for extended periods.
37. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special needs is good overall. Examples of very good or excellent teaching and learning were seen in withdrawal groups for reading, additional literacy and for 'signing' with deaf impairment pupils. In mainstream lessons, there were examples of very good teaching and learning for special needs pupils in English, science geography and art and design. Teachers and learning support workers know their pupils well and their very good relationships help pupils to feel confident- for example, in reading and volunteering their thoughts and ideas to the rest of the group. In a Year 7 withdrawn reading group, teachers encourage pupils to visualise a new word giving them time to reflect before they attempt to spell it. In many instances the pupils are successful which in turn boosts their self-esteem. Teachers use effective teaching and communication methods with the deaf impaired pupils in withdrawn and mainstream lessons. The quality of learning support in lessons observed is very good and makes a positive contribution to promote pupils' independence. Day-to-day assessment is recorded in support workers' progress sheets for those receiving support, but progress is inconsistently linked to key skills. Where teaching is less inspiring in Years 10 and 11, the weaknesses observed are mainly in the effectiveness of planning and teaching methods. For example, activities are not sufficiently challenging and there is less opportunity for practical tasks.
38. In a few ineffective lessons, planning does not always take sufficient account of the needs of groups of differing ability and tasks do not adequately challenge average and higher attaining pupils. In a few lessons, a significant minority of pupils lacks concentration and is distracted

from the tasks in hand. In most instances teachers adopt appropriate ways of dealing with the problem, but in some instances, teaching fails to challenge these pupils. In weak lessons in science, history and geography expectations are low and opportunities are missed to support and extend learning through the use of information technology.

39. Homework is usually used effectively to consolidate and extend learning. Regular homework is set in English, mathematics and science to consolidate classroom learning and coursework levels generally reach a good standard. Sketchbooks in art and design support the satisfactory homework that is frequently set by teachers. In history, for example, teachers' high expectations of pupils in Years 10 and 11 are evident in challenging homework assignments which require a great deal of research skills. Homework is precisely structured in physical education and the guidance is sound and detailed. In some subjects relevant and constructive tasks are set to prepare pupils for the following lessons but there are not enough examples of challenging and imaginative tasks being set for homework and it is not always instrumental in bringing about learning. Pupils are often requested to complete for homework the topics on which they are working in class. Homework planners are well established but not used effectively and consistently to monitor pupils' progress.
40. In most subjects, but not in all lessons, assessment is used satisfactorily to inform planning. In music, self-assessment against known criteria enables pupils to evaluate their own work. The quality of marking varies considerably: some pupils receive valuable information about how to improve, but for others it is less useful. In English, teachers' comments are frequently detailed and combine constructive remarks with targets for improvement. In mathematics, teachers give some helpful advice and feedback on how to improve. Teachers monitor pupils' progress and intervene appropriately but this is not always planned sufficiently in advance. Some subjects do use assessment effectively to improve standards. For example, in physical education pupils are encouraged to evaluate one another's performance and give guidance on how they might improve and in information technology teachers set individual targets and are quick to give help in lessons. Recording provides less helpful direction in information technology, where there are inadequate records of individual pupils' progress.

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

41. As a new school involved in local and national initiatives to raise educational standards in inner city areas, it has been successful in establishing a wide and appropriate curriculum for pupils drawn from diverse social and cultural groups. Its designation as a community school affirms its role as a resource for lifelong learning for the local area. In addition to the National Curriculum requirements the school provides a wide range of additional courses and activities for pupils as well as substantial support for those with particular learning needs.
42. The curriculum in Years 7-9 is good in that there is a broad and balanced provision that covers all subjects of the National Curriculum as well as a successful programme of personal, social and health education that promotes educational inclusion through its encouragement of mutual respect and understanding. Dance and drama are significant and popular features of the curriculum that enable all pupils to experience success. Pupils with different learning needs and language skills are able to participate fully in all areas of curriculum. Information and communications technology is an increasingly important feature of the Years 7-9 curriculum and the programme in Year 7 is effective in establishing a range of basic skill in pupils. However, in the following two years there is not sufficient time or planned opportunity to develop fully pupils' knowledge and skills. To some extent this is also true of design and technology, where staff shortage has caused the school to reduce curriculum time for the subject.
43. In Years 10 and 11, the school has taken full advantage of the increased flexibility in the National Curriculum to provide a wide range of courses that meet the needs and interests of all pupils. Most pupils follow a core of English, mathematics, double award science, design and technology, a modern foreign language, physical education and personal, social and health education. A particular strength of the curriculum is the range of options that pupils can take including humanities, art, drama and vocational courses. A significant number of pupils takes one of the four GNVQ courses that include information and communications technology, leisure and tourism, business and health and social care. The school has also recognised the need for more radical alternative education for the less motivated pupils or those with a particular need to improve their

basic skills. For these there are a number of other work-related courses that involve links with the local college and other agencies.

44. There are two curricular weaknesses that detract from an otherwise very good provision in Years 10 and 11. Firstly, information and communications technology opportunities are not mapped and tracked sufficiently for the school to ensure full coverage of the National Curriculum programme of study. Despite the increased use of computers in many subjects, those pupils not taking information and communications technology or vocational courses do not study all aspects of ICT. GCSE in information and communication technology have a more limited experience of the use and social significance of ICT. The second weakness is in the limited amount of time given to cover religious education, which is insufficient to meet the statutory requirement.
45. The school has a strong commitment to promoting an inclusive education and works hard to ensure equality of access and opportunity for all pupils. For example, pupils identified as having special educational needs have access to a broad and balanced curriculum throughout the school. The school's excellent priorities for total inclusion contribute effectively to the well-supported programmes, such as the reading scheme, additional literacy support, the profound and multiple learning and deaf resource provision. There is a strong emphasis on learning communication skills for those who have weak reading and signing skills. About 50 pupils do not study a modern foreign language. The school recognises the need to monitor their progress and the support these pupils receive in different subjects. There are good plans for an alternative curriculum to be developed at Years 10 and 11. This will include practical activities such as painting, decorating and motorcycle maintenance. In Years 10 and 11, pupils have the opportunity to study work-related and life skills courses. These are at an early stage of development, however, with scope for more practically based teaching to increase the quality of experience of the lowest attainers. Information technology programmes to improve reading spelling, comprehension and numeracy have been developed for all years.
46. In all years pupils are taught a very well designed personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme that includes careers, health and sex education, education for citizenship, environmental education, economic and industrial understanding. The course is generally well taught and addresses important multi-cultural concerns and promotes educational inclusion. The tutorial groups integrate pupils from all year groups and this further supports personal and social development. In this respect the local youth club is well used to provide further social education and counselling opportunities for pupils in lunchtimes and Year 9 pupils take some responsibility and widen their experiences through various visits outside the area.
47. In most subjects, the curriculum is planned effectively and provides continuity and progression both within and across years. Schemes of work have been written which reflect all aspects of the Programmes of Study of the National Curriculum and provide an effective framework for consistency in teaching and to promote learning in lessons. Schemes of work, however, are not followed universally in day-to-day practice, which inhibits their positive impact on attainment and progress. The school is well placed to support literacy and numeracy and as a result of which satisfactory and effective ways have been developed to encourage consistent approaches to reading, writing and number work. However, in some subjects not enough time is given to the development of speaking skills and effective ways of consolidating pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are not developed well enough. Although the mathematics department is developing effective strategies to raise standards in numeracy, particularly in Years 7-9, there is limited use of opportunities to enhance numeracy across all subjects.
48. The careers programme has been well devised and has strong links with the local careers service. There are good resources, including computer software, to support career choice and job opportunities. All pupils have work experience and carefully structured careers education takes place within the PSHE programme.
49. The curriculum is enriched with a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Drama, physical education and music make outstanding contributions. Pupils participate enthusiastically in a range of sports activities with many trips outside the school, including soccer visits to the Netherlands and ski trips to Italy. Most other subjects provide additional learning and recreational activities. Drama and music provide much other appreciated classes and events while English has a planned extra-curricular programme that includes competitions and theatre visits.

50. Many of the additional activities are part of a coherent and effective strategy to promote educational inclusion and greater equality of opportunity. The school, in collaboration with local agencies, has developed substantial after-school homework provision that makes use of school staff and other professionals. Through this provision, for example, the school is able to offer community and other languages leading to GCSE. Learning mentors are also in place to focus on particular pupils needing academic and personal help and support. The school is involved in the Excellence in Cities initiative and has used additional funding to provide enrichment for those pupils identified as gifted and talented. This has taken the form of master classes, residential courses and visits to universities.
51. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is good. There are many examples of these dimensions referred to in the school's documentation, especially regarding collective worship, equal opportunities and pastoral policies. This area is well co-ordinated and appropriate steps have been taken to involve the whole school in planning its development. Assemblies are part of this, and some social and moral issues are addressed. However, there is little time for reflection, and assemblies rarely constitute worship. Some departments have taken steps to develop a policy that will inform departmental planning. The PSHE programme is an integral part of the school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
52. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. A termly booklet entitled "Thoughts for the Week" is produced for tutors to use in registration time or assembly time. Some good examples of its use were observed. A prayer facility is made available for Muslim pupils during Ramadan and there are plans for a Christian meeting place, in association with the youth worker from a local church. Some subjects provide opportunities for spiritual development. In English, texts provide material for reflection on pupils' personal experiences and values and those of others. Myths and poetry provide a powerful appeal to the imagination. In science, the displays show a religious and scientific view of how the world began. In art and design, there are opportunities to develop insights allied to the work of artists. In religious education, pupils are encouraged to respond to religious beliefs and experiences and to reflect on the relevance of these in their daily lives.
53. Provision for moral development is very good. This is a strength of the school, provided largely through the well-planned PSHE programme and religious education. A wide range of appropriate themes includes attitudes to nuclear war, use and misuse of alcohol, sex education, drugs education, the family and relationships. The school has clear expectations of pupils' knowing right from wrong, and pupils respond well when corrected. Some subjects contribute significantly towards providing opportunities for moral development. In physical education emphasis is given to fair play and behaviour in teams. In English, the work invites empathy with feelings of other people and the examination of moral predicaments and choices. Work on bullying, theft and racism also contribute. In art and design, there is a good promotion of principles, which distinguish right from wrong.
54. Provision for social development is also very good. The school encourages pupils to take responsibility and develop social understanding. Planned opportunities for social development are there in the PSHE programme and include topics on health and hygiene, rights and responsibilities, the family, personal safety and relationships. A planned unit on citizenship is to be introduced shortly. A local youth worker comes to the school to take 30 Year 9 pupils at a time. This is called Team Challenge, and its aim is to develop social skills and an awareness of the needs of the local community. It is a valuable initiative. In lessons pupils from a range of backgrounds mix very well. In drama there are good examples of group work and topics like homelessness and pregnancy also contribute. In English, a diversity of social issues is raised by texts such as "To kill a Mocking Bird" and "The Outsiders". In physical education the importance of team spirit is emphasized. and in science there is good teamwork in practical lessons. Community projects outside the school, arranged by the community tutor, provide a valuable range of opportunities for social development. These include the youth awareness project, Newham Against Domestic Violence and sexual health groups. This year 30 pupils represented the school at the Newham Health Conference and participated in workshops and discussion groups. Pupils also raised £600 for the Richard House Hospice.
55. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. There is a clear recognition in the school of the variety of different cultures and religious faiths and traditions. Individual pupils are encouraged to share their experiences of their own cultures and this provides a valuable learning experience. In art and design pupils have good opportunities to appreciate the cultural tradition of various artists

through visits to galleries. In English there is a range of opportunities for theatre visits, productions and a debating society. The school is well situated for visits. Year 9 pupils have visited the Globe Theatre and, in Years 10 and 11 visits to the Tate Modern and a study experience to Paris have contributed to cultural development. Other visits include barge trips, fashion shows, museums and one to the Millennium Dome. In modern foreign languages, pupils visit Germany and Paris. There are also a number of trips to sporting events.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

56. Overall, the school makes very good arrangements for the care and welfare of its pupils. The child protection procedures are very good, with all staff being aware of how to handle any issues that arise and members of the senior management team trained appropriately to enable them to carry out the role of child protection co-ordinator. A very high priority is given to health and safety in the school. Many problems arose as a result of the move to the new building and some, such as leaking roofs, are still unresolved. However, the site supervisor (who is also a governor) liaises closely with the appropriate agencies and ensures that regular checks are made to the building, grounds and equipment. An appropriate number of staff is trained in first aid and the procedures for reporting and recording accidents are satisfactory.
57. Overall, the educational and personal support and guidance for pupils are good. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour work effectively and are based largely on the mixed-aged vertical tutor group system. A system of referral slips ensures that the appropriate members of staff are made aware of any incidents that arise in the course of the day and records are kept on individual pupils' files. As a result, a comprehensive picture can be built of the patterns of behaviour. The patrol system whereby a senior member of staff moves around the school each lesson is also an effective tool for monitoring behaviour. Good behaviour is promoted through the use of rewards where the accumulation of merits can give rise to tangible benefits such as credits for the computer, the tuck shop or vouchers.
58. The procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are also good. Records are kept of any incidents of intimidation or racism and pupils are very confident in the staff's ability to act on anything that is reported to them. Pupils are encouraged to think of the impact of their actions on others and this has a positive effect on reducing oppressive behaviour. Support groups are organised by the team of learning mentors to resolve conflict in an attempt to reduce cases of intimidation. The pastoral role played by tutors also encourages more social interaction between Year groups and reduces oppressive behaviour.
59. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment, progress and personal development are good. Information is collected and analysed on pupils' academic achievement from a range of tests on entry to the school. These assessments and information from primary schools are used to build a profile on each pupil and to set targets. The more able are categorized as needing more demanding work and those with learning or behaviour difficulties are well supported. The school tracks academic achievement using a computer programme devised for that purpose so that when it comes to reviewing progress the information can be readily retrieved and analysed. The role of the tutor and the use of a mentor system have been effective in assessing and monitoring attainment and progress. Assessments in English, mathematics, geography, art religious education and drama are good and reliable and contribute to the progress made by pupils in those subjects. Assessments made in other subjects, science, history modern foreign language and information and communications technology are less reliable, particularly in Years 7, 8 and 9. This is because they are not agreed fully amongst all the teachers. Achievement by pupils is recognised through an award system. This raises pupils' expectations.
60. Monitoring of pupils' personal development is also good and is done through their reports and the compilation of individual records of achievement. Communication among Key Stage Team staff and between staff and pupils is regular and constructive. Each pupil in Years 10 and 11 is monitored by a form tutor and a mentor. These systems are new and are already raising the expectations of teachers and pupils' motivation and behaviour in the school. They have yet to have an impact on standards of attainment.
61. The quality of care and welfare for special needs pupils is good. They are identified and tested effectively on entry, with the involvement of outside agencies. Support for pupils with speech and language delay, deaf impairment and profound and multiple learning difficulties is good. Pupils

with statements are effectively monitored and annual review assessments meet all statutory requirements. Individual education plans have realistic targets linked effectively to key skills and pupils are assessed regularly. Additional assessment of reading is effective and constructive comments are fed back to pupils. Learning Service Team Co-ordinators monitor progress each term and profiles of need for pupils on Stage 1 of the register are reviewed yearly. However, pupils on the lower stages of the special needs register are less aware of their targets and individual education plans record progress inconsistently.

62. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are satisfactory. The computerised attendance system makes it easy to monitor attendance in relation to individual pupils, tutor groups and year group but this system is not yet being used to its full capacity to improve attendance. Persistent offenders can be identified by this system and a referral is made to the two education welfare officers, who will shortly be employed full-time by the school itself. Support from the learning mentors is given to those who need it and on occasion a revised timetable is instituted to encourage a return to school. Parents receive an individual printout of their children's attendance record that also gives a breakdown of attendance per subject.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

63. The school aims to work in partnership with parents in supporting their children's education. The evidence from the pre-inspection questionnaires and the parents' meeting show that Parents generally have satisfactory views of the school. Although only a very small number of parents completed the questionnaire, a high percentage of those who did felt that the school had high expectations of pupils and that the school was approachable. The issues that parents were least satisfied with were in relation to the amount of homework pupils get, the way the school works closely with parents and the information they receive about the progress their children are making. Inspection findings are that while there is some inconsistency in the way homework is set and marked, the use of homework, in general, is satisfactory.
64. The headteacher is approachable and easily accessible to parents. There is scope for improvement, however, in the way the school works with parents, as the links are not as effective as they could be and the effect of parents' involvement on the work of the school is unsatisfactory. Senior staff are aware of this. As a result, tutors are now encouraged to establish closer links with parents through personal contact in relation to poor attendance, behaviour and also when there is something to celebrate. The community tutor is working with a small group of parents interested in supporting the school, as there is currently no Parent Teacher Association or strong links through other associations.
65. Many parents make a satisfactory contribution to their children's learning by signing the homework planners regularly and attending the academic review days, as well as supporting concerts and funding overseas trips to France and Germany.
66. Inspection evidence confirms the views of parents about the quality of the information they receive about their children's progress. The annual written report gives targets for improvement in all subjects but does not give information about what the pupils can do. In addition, some of the targets are too general and not subject specific and there is no consistency in the use of National Curriculum levels to indicate progress. There are useful curriculum guides for different year groups, given out to parents at the start of each academic year. Although newsletters are sent frequently to parents they claim that not enough notice is given about meetings and closures for staff training.
67. The statutory information provided for parents is poor. The governors have not produced an annual report since the school opened in September 1999 (although they have now set up a working party to do so) and there has not been a governors' annual meeting for parents either. The prospectus has several statutory items missing, including the rates of authorised and unauthorised absence, the destinations of school leavers and information about religious education and the parental right to withdraw their child from it. The school should ensure that all legally required information is produced as soon as possible.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

68. The school is well managed. The headteacher provides effective, purposeful and clear leadership. She enjoys the trust and confidence of the governing body and is ably assisted by the senior management team. She has successfully steered the school through a difficult transition period and established policies and structures for the new school. The senior management team has analysed a number of the school's developmental needs and established key priorities for action for the new school. A number of successful initiatives have included:
- establishment of clear policies to promote teaching and learning and social inclusion
 - reorganizing staffing structures and redefining the roles of the senior management team to support pastoral and academic teams
 - strengthening management in English, mathematics and science
 - reviewing and updating schemes of work; developing portfolios of good exemplars of materials at all levels/grades
 - establishing curricular links with local primary schools and further education colleges.
69. The lines of communication between the head and staff have been strengthened. The systems and structures necessary to sustain the continued improvement are now in place. The impetus for improvement in standards is provided through target-setting and extensive monitoring of standards by the headteacher. The use of assessment information and analysis of pupils' performance enables appropriate targets to be set for individuals and Year groups. The curriculum is well managed, is informed by current educational thinking and it offers extensive opportunities for learning, particularly in Years 10 and 11. The headteacher's view of pastoral care and social inclusion is well communicated, understood and supported by all staff. The school has established a caring ethos and is highly successful in promoting the welfare of pupils.
70. The school has a strong commitment to raise pupils' attainment throughout the school. With the support of the local education authority's general adviser for the school, it has set realistic targets, after thorough analysis of pupils' prior attainment. Appropriate strategies are in place to develop pupils' literacy skills, which were low but are now improving. The LEA's subject specialist advisers have evaluated the work of the humanities, science, and art and design departments and provided them with constructive support. Inspection evidence indicates that there has been significant improvement in many subjects as a result of these developments. Pupils' attainment and progress have been reduced by the severe shortage of teachers in the key subjects of English, mathematics, science, modern foreign languages and design and technology.
71. There are effective procedures for consultation, planning and review. The senior management team functions effectively to formulate and monitor school policies and standards in matters relating to pupils' attainment and progress and their welfare. Monitoring and support are generally satisfactory but not all senior managers have yet participated in evaluating rigorously the quality of teaching, standards and aspects of other provision. The delegation of responsibilities to heads of department has been strengthened. Most are clear about their accountability for standards within their subject and about their role in action planning, monitoring and evaluation in the drive to raise standards. The management skills of middle managers are improving in most areas. Leadership is very good in English, art and design, geography and modern foreign languages and music. At the departmental level the quality of curricular planning has improved and departmental schemes of work are detailed and provide an effective framework for teaching but in some cases are not translated fully into successful practice.
72. The quality of leadership and management in the learning support department is very good. The learning support team plays a key role in the development of the inclusive practice which permeates the school, A clearly written policy outlines the arrangements for special education needs and resourced provision within the school, though a special needs handbook is still at developmental stage. The staffing expertise in the special needs team is a strength. Partner teachers, visiting experts and tutors, co-ordinators and pupil support workers share the commitment to improve and the capacity to succeed. Funding is well used to support special educational needs in the school.
73. Positive relationships and mutual trust exist between the governing body and the senior management team. The governors are aware of their responsibilities to meet statutory responsibilities and to monitor the overall performance of the school. The governing body possesses a strategic view of the school's development through information provided by the headteacher and the senior management team. Many governors are gaining confidence in fulfilling their role. They are committed to school improvement and work hard in a well-organised committee structure to ensure continuous development. The school meets all requirements in

respect of pupils with special educational needs but it fails to fulfil statutory requirements in respect of information and communications technology and religious education in Years 10 and 11. The headteacher informs governors well about areas for development. She attends all governing body's meetings. Currently the governing body depends heavily on the school to provide information on the development and progress and to set educational direction. They need to take a more proactive role in shaping the educational direction, to strengthen partnership with parents and to improve the quality of information given to them, and undertake more independent reviews of the school's work and achievement.

74. The day-to-day administration is efficient and lines of communication are clear within the school. Staff feel their views are taken into account and opportunities for comments are available. The headteacher and senior staff are approachable and approached. Parents' involvement in the life of the school and their children's education needs to be strengthened.
75. The existing teachers are deployed satisfactorily to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum and support the learning of pupils. There are too few specialist teachers for English, mathematics, design and technology, physical education and learning support. This has a serious detrimental impact on standards of attainment. Vacancies have been advertised twice and generated only one applicant, who was unqualified and not appointed. At the time of inspection, there were 11.4 shortages pending in April 2001. The school has made creative efforts to improve recruitment, including holding an open day, inviting teacher training institutions and holding consultation with unions and the LEA. Parents rightly expressed concerns about these aspects and inspectors agree with them that the teacher shortages adversely affect pupils' attainment and progress. The school has managed such a crisis with integrity. Full time staff has shown commitment in using non-teaching time, reducing the requirement for supply cover, but resulting in an overload for those teachers bearing the shortage.
76. Arrangements for professional development are good and opportunities are provided for teachers to update their skills. A few teachers need in-service training on classroom management and teaching methodology. Professional training days are used to provide staff, including support staff, with training which supports the identified needs of the school. The quality of support and the induction procedures for newly qualified teachers are good. Pupil teachers are well supported.
77. The school's accommodation is good, overall, but does not always support pupils' learning. Accommodation for teaching and learning is very good for music and drama. There is a good learning resources area, for all pupils, which incorporates the library and some of the school's information and communication technology provision. There is a very good infrastructure throughout the school for information and communications technology.
78. Inadequate accommodation hinders learning in physical education and art and design. The playing fields are unsatisfactory. They do not have a safe, suitable playing surface and suffer severe drainage problems. The school has not been able to use them since it opened.
79. The school is vigilant in attending to the numerous rainwater leaks, problems with the heating system and doors not fitting properly. There are still some items of maintenance concerning these matters that need attention. The reduction of approximately £1,000,000 for funding the new building is now starting to have an effect. The number of pupils on roll is increasing rapidly. Soon the school will be beyond the limits of its present classroom accommodation. To meet the shortfall, the school is considering the provision of four mobile classrooms.
80. Resources for learning are sufficient, easily accessible to staff and pupils and generally used efficiently to meet the demands of the National Curriculum. The information technology resources are much improved, having modern specifications and being networked, and are used efficiently to support work in subjects such as mathematics, science and geography. Resources are used efficiently and special needs pupils make good gains in knowledge and understanding.
81. The library is an attractive area for study. It has an interesting arrangement of shelving and the private study areas are supervised easily. Two banks of computers in the library are a great asset for whole class teaching although the concentration of pupils in the central study area presents some difficulty. The current library stock has been reviewed and extended following the move to the new site. This, together with excellent information technology provision, supports good opportunities for reading and research.

82. The school manages its resources efficiently and effectively. The quality of financial planning is very good and is an integral part of educational improvement. It is not yet sufficiently linked to the school development plan. Priorities are not costed and sufficiently flexible to act as a primary vehicle for informing budgetary decisions. The special grants for special needs and Excellence in Cities are used effectively and efficiently, ensuring that resources are used as planned and that value for money is obtained.
83. The school's governors exercise responsible oversight of the school's income and expenditure. Well supported by the senior resource officer, they manage the school budget effectively. The school's accounts are audited regularly. The recent audit report commented favourably on the financial statement prepared by the governors, proper accounting records and effective internal controls in respect of grants. The governors do not yet apply the principles of good value for money to evaluate the impact of their decisions on pupils' attainment and progress.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

84. In order to raise levels of attainment and improve the quality of education in the school, the governors, senior management team and teaching staff, with the support of the local education authority, need to:

- **Raise pupils' attainment throughout the school by:**
 - tackling staff shortages in key subjects
 - targeting in-service training on effective teaching methods, where needed
 - challenging the unacceptable behaviour of a few pupils
 - using Key Stage 2 National Curriculum test results to build upon pupils' strengths and weaknesses
 - ensuring that the school's policies on homework and marking are followed consistently.
 - *(Paragraphs: 2-4, 7,9-21,24,32,34,35,38,40, 47,66,70,75,91-93,105-106,116-118,127,135-136,140-142, 146-148, 154,158,177, 179, 184, 186, 192,194, 195,198.)*
- **Ensure that the school meets statutory requirement for religious education and information and communications technology for pupils in Years 10 and 11 by:**
 - including religious education and information and communications technology in the Years 10 and 11 curriculum
 - monitoring pupils' information technology skills and ensuring effective applications across curriculum.
 - *(Paragraphs: 44,73, 159, 162, 190.)*
- **Improve attendance and reduce high rates of unauthorised absence by:**
 - continuing with strategies recently set in place
 - setting precise targets for each form and Year group to achieve.
 - *(Paragraphs:29,62,64,91,119,136,149, 166, 195.)*
- **Improve the effectiveness of the management by:**
 - developing further senior and middle managers' roles in monitoring more rigorously the quality of teaching and standards in their subjects
 - defining clear success criteria against which the improvement can be measured.
 - *(Paragraphs: 60,71,103, 124, 145.)*
- **Increase the governors' role in determining the direction of the school by:**
 - taking a more proactive role in shaping the educational direction of the school
 - strengthening the partnership with parents and improving the quality of information provided about the work of the school.
 - *(Paragraphs:64, 67,83>)*

In addition the following paragraphs refer to lesser weaknesses that the governors should include in their post-inspection action plan:

- 49, 63 - homework;
- 50 - 59 - assessment;
- 51 - school assemblies;
- 77 - 79 - accommodation.

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

PUPILS WITH PROFOUND LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

85. Pupils with Profound Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD) are making good achievement overall. The majority of pupils are making very good progress in personal, social and health education programmes. Improvement in behaviour and physical mobility is good. Of the eight pupils in the PMLD resourced provision, four from the first year intake, have progressed sufficiently to be described as having special learning difficulties (SLD). These pupils are making good progress in the use of language - for example, drawing or colouring an object to represent familiar words, tracing letters or describing a tree while looking out of the window. All four pupils are attending a majority of mainstream classes. Pupils develop good personal skills learning how to look after themselves as much as possible, for example, changing for physical education and physiotherapy sessions and learning about healthy living. During exercises, pupils are encouraged to count the movements aloud with the pupil support worker to extend their understanding of number. Pupils are given the opportunity, both in mixed classes and when they are taught separately, to participate fully, to make choices and show their engagement in learning. In a withdrawn group for science activities, all the pupils were totally involved in experiencing darkness when they placed a box over their heads and a few suggested the colour of light as yellow and white, while others repeated the words. Most gained confidence in speaking, as they became involved in activities such as spinning coloured discs and watching the patterns and colours change. The school's emphasis on providing stimulating activities that are suitably graded for age and maturity is very effective. All pupils are encouraged to show respect for one another, work increasingly well together and share in the celebration when they do well.
86. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Effective teamwork uses the strengths of individual teachers in partner teaching, pupil support workers and visiting experts when planning ahead. Teachers have a consistent approach to learning and the teaching of basic skills. They begin lessons with a clear introduction to pupils, who are grouped together and use direct and sustained questioning to check what they already know and encourage them to explain their answers. For example, they help pupils understand the concept of dark and light, demonstrating effectively by switching off lights, pulling blinds down and using torches, making good use of resources to support learning and provide challenging and enjoyable activities to keep pupils engaged. The quality of learning support in mainstream lessons is very good and makes a positive contribution to the continuing development towards total inclusion. SLD pupils take an active part in three or four lessons each day where they are increasing their independence and integration with other pupils. Teacher and support staff relationships are very good, which contributes well to the supportive atmosphere in which pupils are made to feel secure to volunteer thoughts and opinions. Pupils who need individual support in the base receive expert advice from external consultants, as seen in the planned individual programme observed during the inspection for the treatment of a pupil with a rare variant within the autistic spectrum. Both consultant and special support assistant work well together and expertise is shared effectively.
87. The quality and range of learning opportunities for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are very good. The range has expanded as improvements in behaviour and physical mobility have progressed and pupils have moved towards total integration in mainstream lessons. The overall commitment to total inclusion is a strength and equality of access and opportunity is excellent. Pupils are withdrawn to receive therapeutic programmes, training for toileting and use of equipment. Modified programmes of study for personal, social and physical programmes are appropriately in place, but language and number programmes for those pupils who are not yet fully integrated in mainstream lessons are inconsistently linked to the foundation stage curriculum. The department, however, is working closely with the local authority to adapt information technology packages to assist with additional language and number development and planning with subject teachers are in the early stages of development. There are good examples of creative work on display; however, there is less opportunity for purposeful play in discrete areas to stimulate learning leading towards National Curriculum programmes of study.
88. The quality of welfare and care is very good. The learning support team and teachers know pupils well. Pupils and parents can meet at a base each day before pupils are taken to lessons or for withdrawn support and break and lunchtime supervision is effective. As they become more independent, pupils attend tutor time. Pupils are carefully phased into secondary school where they get to know a small number of staff before they are integrated into mainstream classes. A

pupil support worker is assigned to a pupil for a day, which effectively improves continuity while discouraging dependent relationships. Individual education plans have realistic targets linked appropriately to key skills. Pupils' behaviour, social and personal skills are assessed appropriately against the targets set, but pupil support workers' daily records need to be more rigorous in recording progress linked with key skills and National Curriculum guidelines. Statements are effectively monitored and annual review assessments meet all statutory requirements. Specific disability-related provision is appropriately implemented, such as aids for mobility, seeing and hearing. While liaison with outside agencies for specialist support is good, overall, a more structured approach with Health Service and Social Services provision is being developed currently.

89. Co-ordination of the PMLD resourced provision is very good. Good features include the monitoring of practice by working alongside pupil support workers in lessons, which provides effective training for new staff. Teachers and support staff share expertise across mainstream and resourced special needs provision. A policy document outlines clear guidelines of admission procedures, provision, assessment and evaluation and links with external services and parents. Accommodation lacks en-suite toilet and sluicing facilities, though plans to provide a secure outdoor space as an integral learning resource are in discussion.
90. Funding is well used for the PMLD resourced provision. The multi-sensory resource makes a valuable and stimulating contribution to learning, particularly for pupils with severe learning difficulties.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

192

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

43

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	28	42	26	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 – Y 11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	1202	(n/a)
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	553	(n/a)

Special educational needs

	Y7 – Y 11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	104	(n/a)
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	576	(n/a)

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	288

Pupil mobility in the last school Year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	38
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	39

Attendance

Authorised absence

	per cent
School data	7.0
National comparative data	5.9

Unauthorised absence

	per cent
School data	3.0
National comparative data	0.4

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	121	120	241

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	21	44	18
	Girls	43	43	27
	Total	64	87	45
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	27 (n/a)	36 (n/a)	21 (n/a)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	3 (n/a)	18 (n/a)	4 (n/a)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	33	41	20
	Girls	52	50	24
	Total	85	91	44
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	35 (n/a)	38 (n/a)	18 (n/a)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	10(n/a)	17(n/a)	3(n/a)
	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	112	102	214

GCSE results		5 or more grades A*-C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	10	94	100
	Girls	27	92	102
	Total	37	186	202
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	17.3 (n/a)	87 (n/a)	95 (n/a)
	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	26 (n/a)
	National	38.4 (38)

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

Vocational qualifications		Number	per cent success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	69	47.8
	National		(n/a)

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	38
Black – African heritage	109
Black – other	23
Indian	25
Pakistani	29
Bangladeshi	37
Chinese	26
White	853
Any other minority ethnic group	62

Exclusions in the last school Year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	2	0
Black – African heritage	20	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	1	0
Pakistani	5	0
Bangladeshi	5	0
Chinese	0	0
White	90	1
Other minority ethnic groups	21	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: Y 7 – Y 11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	78
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15.41

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: : Y 7 – Y 11

Total number of education support staff	33.2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	986

Deployment of teachers: : Y 7 – Y 11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	71.8
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Average teaching group size: : Y 7 – Y 11

Key Stage 2	n/a
Key Stage 3	22.7
Key Stage 4	20.8

Financial information

Financial Year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	4490667
Total expenditure	4562240
Expenditure per pupil	3796.00
Balance brought forward from previous Year	134848
Balance carried forward to next Year	67,275

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1202
Number of questionnaires returned	135

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	41	47	11	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	36	47	9	5	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	31	43	16	4	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	21	42	26	6	5
The teaching is good.	35	47	8	2	8
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	25	46	21	7	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	49	40	7	3	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	48	43	4	2	2
The school works closely with parents.	22	48	22	6	3
The school is well led and managed.	31	49	9	5	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	36	44	14	4	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	30	45	11	2	12

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

The parents have satisfactory views of the school. They think that the headteacher is approachable and easily accessible. They are generally supportive of the school and recognise that some of the issues relating to communication with parents have arisen as a result of the newness of the school. The issues that parents were least satisfied with were in relation to the amount of homework pupils get, the way the school works closely with parents and the information they receive about the progress their child is making. Parents are concerned about the disruptive behaviour of some pupils and the effect this has on the progress of others.

Other issues raised by parents

Parents are concerned about the shortage of suitably qualified teachers in English, mathematics, science, modern foreign languages and design and technology and its impact on their children's education.

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

ENGLISH

91. The proportion of pupils attaining level 5 and higher and level 6 and higher in end-of-Year 9 National Curriculum tests in 2000 was very low compared with the national average. It was also well below teachers' assessments. Boys performed slightly better than girls, which was against the national pattern, but both results were below national averages. The average points score in English was also very low in relation to the average for similar schools. The proportion of GCSE grades A*-C in English in 2000 was well below the national average, while the proportion of grades A*-G was below the national average. Girls outperformed boys at grades A*-C by a margin smaller than the national. The percentage of grades A*-C in English literature in 2000 was also well below national averages, the proportion of A*-G grades being below national comparisons. Girls outperformed boys by a margin slightly smaller than that found nationally. Within this context, pupils with English as an additional language achieved well. Factors contributing to low GCSE results in 2000 included the shortage of permanent qualified English staff during the preceding year, low attendance rates among pupils, and the inevitable disruption caused by the removal of the school to new premises. Pupils entered for GCSE English in 2000 did as well as in the average of all their GCSEs, girls doing slightly better and boys slightly worse. Those entered for English literature in 2000 did significantly worse than in the average of their other GCSEs; while girls did slightly better, boys did significantly worse.
92. The inspection found that pupils' standards of attainment at the end of Year 9 are well below average and work seen in lessons was below average. They can speak fluently and effectively in informal discussion groups, and speak accurately, though usually very briefly, in whole-class situations. Pupils sometimes lack the precise vocabulary they need in order to make themselves clear in formal situations. Many lack confidence and are unwilling to volunteer answers, but most listen well. Pupils read aloud competently but reading often lacks expression. Comprehension skills are slow to develop and pupils are not good at inference and deduction. The great majority takes care over writing. The best creative and imaginative work in all year groups is well sustained, and higher-attaining pupils write confidently, using a wide vocabulary effectively and matching their style well to a range of tasks and audiences. Word-processing is frequently used from Year 8 onwards, but pupils do not redraft and proofread what they write. The greater proportion of written work is poorly organised: it lacks interest and variety of expression, and pupils are very often unable to develop their ideas satisfactorily. There is a general weakness in discursive writing, and inaccuracies in basic punctuation and straightforward spellings persist in all years. Girls' writing is generally better than boys' in all year groups. The linguistic needs of pupils with English as an additional language are well met in lessons supported by specialist teacher, but elsewhere such pupils are frequently held back by their lack of vocabulary and idiom rather than by their understanding. Those with special educational needs are supported effectively in class
93. Attainment at the end of Year 11 is well below average. Standards of work in lessons are below average. Oral confidence improves for many at this stage while the quality of group discussion remains satisfactory. Most can explain their work clearly and often readily contribute ideas in class. Pupils' reading aloud improves only slightly in quality from preceding years but their levels of understanding are appropriate for their age. Those doing media studies develop the skill of 'reading' images satisfactorily, but the majority in a Year 11 class found connotation and discrimination difficult. Standards in writing vary greatly. A small minority writes competently, showing good understanding and satisfactory responses to texts. Some pupils in both Years use evidence and quotation satisfactorily, and develop their ideas effectively. The most able produce good quality original work in both poetry and prose. Most pupils, as earlier, find structuring their work difficult, even when they plan it beforehand. Words on paper pose a problem for many pupils, both in reading and writing. Spelling and syntax are often weak, and verb tenses are frequently mishandled, as is the congruence of subject with verb. Some poor attitudes to work are evident in the number of brief or unfinished pieces in lower-attaining pupils' folders. A regular inability to handle connectives often creates a monotonous style. First language interference is occasionally evident in writing by a few pupils with English as a second language, but otherwise

they cope well. Pupils with special educational needs progress well because they are provided with tasks matched to their needs.

94. Rates of progress are satisfactory, overall. In all years, pupils' predominantly positive attitudes towards learning and the good quality of teaching they receive from specialist staff combine to ensure that the great majority makes the maximum progress of which they are capable. Work in lessons is planned and managed to match pupils' varying needs, so that higher-attainers are challenged equally with those of lesser ability. The majority of pupils in all Years gain satisfactorily in skills and knowledge. As seen in a very good Year 8 lesson on the topic of survival, pupils are enabled to consolidate and reflect on earlier learning. Small-group work frequently encourages growth of pupils' confidence, as was seen in a good revision lesson on "Macbeth" in Year 9. Stimulating presentation and teachers' high expectations facilitate progress.
95. Overall, the quality of teaching is good, being slightly better in Years 7-9 than subsequently because a larger proportion of lessons in Years 10 and 11 was satisfactory. There are also some weaknesses. Teachers in all years have worked extremely hard to build constructive relationships with their pupils so that they can learn in a supportive environment. They also manage pupils well and offer a range of classroom activities, which encourages pupils to become involved. A very good Year 10 lesson on a GCSE drama text illustrated many of the strengths seen elsewhere: the lesson was well planned so as to provide a series of 'short burst' activities which helped to hold pupils' concentration and maintain their interest: these were particularly effective with boys and with the many whose concentration was limited. The teacher used questions skillfully, drawing contributions from a large number, and encouraged pupils to speculate widely about the interpretation of a painting as a stimulus to some creative writing. The whole lesson was well paced, with excellent use being made of the support teacher as a team teacher, and also of the electronic whiteboard.
96. Teachers use their very good knowledge and understanding to plan and carry out lessons which are usually interesting and which provide adequate challenge at several levels. They make good use of learning objectives to measure progress at the ends of lessons. Their records and mark-books are kept up to date. Marking of work is consistent, regular and accurate. Teachers' comments are frequently detailed and combine constructive remarks with diagnosis and targets for improvement. In lessons too, teachers' response to pupils' work and contributions is generous: in a good Year 7 lesson the teacher used pupils' oral responses skillfully to link up various episodes in the book being read, so that pupils gained fresh insights into characterisation.
97. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good overall, and in many lessons in Years 7-9 a high level of involvement and interest was observed. Because of the supportive environment created, most pupils respond well to both task and teacher, settle quickly to work, and often find learning enjoyable. In a few lessons, a significant minority lacks concentration and risks distracting the rest of the class. In most instances teachers resolve this tension relatively unobtrusively, but in one Year 8 lesson the opportunity to vary teaching methods to meet this problem was missed. Other small weaknesses involved lapses in timing.
98. The English team is very well led and managed. There is a strong sense of shared values and commitment to raising pupils' levels of attainment. Curricular planning and the way it is taught are both good and sound procedures underpin assessment and tracking of pupils' progress. The existing team works very hard to cover for a long-term staff shortage. There is a very good programme for internal self-review, and collaborative work and communication are very well developed. The team makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and provides an extensive programme of extra-curricular activities, which includes a special programme for gifted and talented pupils. It has succeeded in making its teaching and learning truly inclusive. In view of the levels of prior attainment of pupils, the department now needs to raise standards of attainment in Years 7 to 9 by speeding up the implementation of literacy-based approaches to Year 7. It should also link its schemes of work for Year 7 more explicitly to strategies contained in the National Literacy Strategy. It should seek to strengthen curricular links with primary Year 6 programmes and develop strategies to improve the quality of pupils' extended writing. Standards in Years 10 and 11 also need improving and the introduction of a wider range of texts in those years should be accompanied by strategies devised to improve pupils' reading development beyond the functional level, so that more pupils develop the skills of inference and deduction in their early Years.

DRAMA

99. Drama is taught as a discrete subject in all Years, within the arts faculty. The proportion of GCSE grades A*-C gained in 2000 was in line with the national average, as was the percentage of grades A*-G. These were among the best GCSE results in the school. Boys outperformed girls at grades A*-C, which reversed the national pattern. Pupils entered for drama in 2000 did significantly better than in the average of all their GCSEs, with boys and girls exceeding the average.
100. On the basis of a small sample of lessons seen, pupils' standards of attainment are about average in Years 7 to 9 and slightly above average at GCSE. In Years 7 to 9 pupils engage in lively discussions and have a facility in creating improvised dialogue. As early as Year 8 most pupils have a competent grasp of basic techniques of expression and presentation. The standard of work in Years 10 and 11 is qualitatively different. Pupils have learned to work together and to sustain their focus over an extended piece of work very well. Work by those with English as an additional language or with special educational needs is indistinguishable from that of their peers. Year 11 pupils, engaged in examination work, showed how they could use a range of relatively sophisticated techniques to great effect, creating drama that was wholly convincing and intensely concentrated.
101. Pupils' attitudes toward work are generally good. They find drama interesting and enjoyable. They therefore respond well to the challenge of learning new skills, and work constructively in groups. In GCSE classes pupils work with an increasing degree of autonomy (in Year 11 on completely equal terms with one another). They develop group responsibility and by Year 11 have progressed considerably in technique and maturity from Year 10.
102. Teaching and learning are very good overall in all years. Teachers plan and manage their lessons very well. Class control is a very strong feature of their work, requiring high standards of commitment from pupils and enabling all to work positively together. The teachers' knowledge of subject and skills is assured, and their enthusiasm and energy are powerful motivators. The teacher in a Year 7 lesson was very good at developing pupils' ideas, provided a good structure for practical work and placed a helpful emphasis on technical terms. Year 11 pupils, working on group realisation for their examination during the week, demonstrated clearly how well they had been taught. Their approach to the task and their commitment to it and to the group was excellent, and the quality of collaboration and maturity of response to the issue for presentation were both very high.
103. Two skilful and enthusiastic teachers teach drama. A very good skills-based drama curriculum for Years 7 to 9 has been devised and implemented, which provides a sound basis for GCSE work. The assessment matrix used for GCSE is now wisely being extended into Year 9. There is a good range of extra-curricular drama, including an annual large-scale production and several visits to, and by, theatre groups during the year.
104. Pupils' experience of drama reinforces and extends their repertoire of learning and expressive skills, as well as enhancing their personal development.

LITERACY

105. Provision for improving pupils' literacy is good. The development of strategies across the school is co-ordinated by a cross-curricular group and there is a literacy development plan aimed at improving progress in subject literacy. There is at present no direct contact with literacy work being done in Year 6 of primary schools, but Saturday School and the West Ham Football Club Literacy Project make a contribution. A programme of corrective reading has been in operation for over 18 months. The practice of pupils reading in registration time was introduced last year after whole-staff training. The Standardised Reading Test is administered to Year 7 pupils and last year showed up considerable discrepancies with the end of Year 6 test results. Pupils' oral skills are appropriate for their ages. Their levels of reading allow the great majority to have full access to the curriculum. The accuracy and structure of most pupils' writing is below national expectations. Many subjects such as mathematics, science, English, history, music, and GNVQ courses make use of techniques such as reading aloud, key-words, redrafting and writing-

frames to help pupils improve their reading and writing. Practice is not wholly consistent within or between departments, so it needs effective coordination.

ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

106. Pupils with English as an additional language comprise over 20 per cent of the school population. Approximately 170 are on Stages 1-3. Between them they speak 45 first languages. Their levels of attainment at GCSE are a tribute to the expertise and hard work of the sole teacher who has responsibility for their language development. Support teachers in lessons provide individuals with valuable targeted support, and the teacher-in-charge works in partnerships with four or five departments for two terms each year. She helps them to develop and incorporate into their teaching programmes appropriate methods for assisting these pupils' language development. Good support is evident in science, mathematics, English, art and design, geography, music and design technology and GNVQ courses. Non-verbal test results are well used in some subjects to plan and support understanding. Pupils at all stages are assessed annually, and the local education authority requires the teacher-in-charge to monitor the progress of 90 pupils each year. The teacher has arranged for GCSE tuition in nine home languages and is beginning to chart the overlap between second-language speakers and those with special educational needs. Provision for these pupils is therefore very good, given the extremely limited resources and personnel available under single regeneration budget funding. However, what is possible on this basis is not sufficient to meet the school's needs.

MATHEMATICS

107. Overall attainment at the end of Year 9 and Year 11 is well below the national average although most pupils achieve appropriately in relation to their prior attainment. In the National Curriculum tests, in 2000, the percentage of pupils reaching level 5 and 6 was well below the national average. When judged on average points scores, boys scored about the same as girls. The performance of pupils in mathematics is as good as in most other subjects at the school, and girls' results are better than boys'. Results at the end of Year 9 and Year 11, are well below average when compared with schools that have a similar percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals. Results in the GCSE examinations are well below national averages. In an effort to raise standards, several initiatives have recently been introduced. These include the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy into Years 7 and 8, setting targets in Years 10 and 11 and the introduction of the Certificate of Achievement for lower attaining pupils instead of GCSE.
108. By the end of Year 9, pupils use various methods to represent data, solve equations with one unknown, understand the relationship between fractions, decimals and percentages and are able to find the area and volume of cubes and cuboids. They use different types of graph to represent data and know how to collect data, represent them on a bar chart and interpret data from a given graph. Pupils can draw pie charts when given the size of the angle but many have difficulty in calculating the size of the angle. Most pupils understand the relationship between fractions, decimals and percentages but rely heavily on the use of calculators when working out answers. Most pupils understand the word *average* and they can work out a mean but they are less secure of the meaning and applications of median and mode to solve mathematical problems. Higher attaining pupils know how to solve equations graphically, are able to find the area and circumference of a circle and understand Pythagoras' theorem and apply it to problem solving. Most of the concepts are applied, as far as possible, to everyday situations. For example, in a lesson on mean average, pupils conducted a survey of the average height of pupils in the room. In another lesson on the same topic, the purpose was to find the average age of people in the room, including adults. The result was that pupils were able to see that mean average is not always appropriate and in this way they were introduced to mode average.
109. In Years 10 and 11, differences in ability become more apparent. Higher attaining pupils in Years 10 and 11 make good progress. Pupils working towards higher-level GCSE are achieving at least in line with the national expectations; in lessons seen, some were achieving above average standards. Most pupils had good grasp of mean and standard deviation, vectors, probability and tree diagrams, and circle geometry but pupils with above average attainment could sketch the graphs of functions derived from other functions. Average attaining pupils studying for GCSE, can solve equations, which contain brackets, draw scatter graphs to find possible correlation and understand all aspects of percentages and ratio. Their ability to draw conclusions is well developed. Some pupils lack confidence in basic numeracy skills. They experience difficulty, for example, in expressing one quantity as a percentage of another. Lower attaining pupils, studying

for a Certificate of Achievement, worked competently on revision examples involving number sequences, area of rectangle, triangle and circle, problems with use of time and solving simple equations. However, they lack basic number skills and have little understanding of place value.

110. The quality of teaching in mathematics is never less than satisfactory, is good overall and has some very good features. Staff are committed to the subject and present it in a variety of different ways to arouse, and retain, pupils' interest. Expectations for achievement and behaviour are high and pupils are encouraged regularly to discuss and explain what they are doing. Work is carefully planned to match ability and age, and various strategies are used to ensure maximum understanding- for example, a Year 9 group (Set 5) investigating volume used small plastic one cm³ cubes to consolidate understanding.
111. In Years 7-9, most lessons are planned in line with the National Numeracy Strategy. At the beginning of lessons is a short, mental arithmetic session, which helps to improve basic number skills. This is followed by discussion of the main topic and a review of what pupils have learned and anything that they might have discovered. There is a growing emphasis by many teachers on the importance of language in the development of pupils' mathematical understanding and more opportunities are being offered for oral work. Teachers promote pupils' literacy skills by displaying and discussing key words and concepts. Most lessons are well managed and classroom behaviour is usually good. Relationships are good.
112. In Years 10 and 11, planning is well matched to pupils' prior attainment, with resources matched to the level of ability. There is effective use of resources especially computerised boards, which allow for recall of work, which has been done previously. Key words are displayed and discussed even for the highest attaining pupils as they may have some problems with English. Regular homework is set to consolidate classroom learning and coursework levels generally reach a good standard. Many lessons are well managed and off task behaviour is dealt with by tact and humour. However, in a few lessons, disruptive behaviour by a small minority of pupils is allowed to interrupt the flow of the lesson.
113. In Years 7-9, most pupils respond well in lessons. They listen attentively and follow instructions about methodology. They work well individually or in pairs, and produce a satisfactory amount of work. In the final oral session, they contribute well to discussing their work. They are happy to talk about their work at any time and the majority has a good recall of work learned previously. In Years 10 and 11 pupils are less responsive orally in class but they usually settle well to written work and show good concentration. Pupils are encouraged to contribute ideas to the lesson and, in an investigation concerning the time it takes for tomatoes to go bad, one pupil suggested that the tomatoes be colour-coded. There are signs of independent learning, with coursework of a good standard. Homework is set regularly and usually completed on time.
114. Social inclusion in the subject is very good. All pupils are given the same curricular opportunities and treated equally by staff. Provision for gifted and talented pupils is good. There are extra lessons in Years 10 and 11, holiday revision and a competition, "Olympiads", for the higher attaining pupils. Statistics is taught in Years 10 and 11 as a separate subject and pupils, who achieve above average grades at the end of Year 9, are encouraged to take it to GCSE. Pupils with English as an additional language are assisted by the key words system in each lesson, and supported by the teacher. There is no extra support in lessons for pupils with English as an additional language. Pupils with special educational needs receive support from the special needs department. Hearing-impaired pupils are well supported by a specialist teacher. Pupils with learning difficulties or those with emotional or behavioural difficulties receive support but this is applied less consistently. Some sets of lower attaining pupils with numbers up to 30 pupils do not receive any extra support.
115. The teaching of information and communications technology within the department makes a significant contribution to the subject with pupils in Years 7 and 8 following the "Future School" scheme for one period each week. These lessons are held in the learning resource centre. In addition, one mathematics classroom holds a bank of computers, and there are a number of computers in the other classrooms. Numeracy skills are taught through the scheme of work and the mental arithmetic session at the start of each lesson. Numeracy skills are used in other subject areas e.g. representing data in ICT and subdividing rhythms in music. However, there is no planned programme for numeracy across the curriculum.

116. The subject is well managed by the coordinator, supported by staff with delegated responsibilities. The development plan identifies effectively priorities for action and much thought and effort have gone into devising ways to improve standards of attainment. Progress is closely monitored and, each term, a review of each teaching group is undertaken, and pupils are moved to a different group when necessary. The accommodation for the subject is good and learning resources including ICT facilities, are plentiful and accessible.
117. The staff shortage affects adversely the work in the subject, which has a negative impact on pupils' progress. At present, there are two vacancies – one long-term and another recent one. Supply teachers, most of whom are not specialists in the subject, cover the long-term vacancy. The recent vacancy is covered by the mathematics staff taking on extra classes, which creates an overload of work for them. It also means a reorganisation of groups in Years 7-9, some of which become too large, especially for lower attaining pupils.

SCIENCE

118. Results of National Curriculum tests in 2000 showed attainment to be very low at the end of Year 9. The number reaching the expected level 5 was low and that reaching the higher levels 6 and above very low compared with national averages. The performance of both boys and girls was very low when compared with national averages. Boys performed only slightly better than girls. Compared with similar schools, results were very low.
119. By age 16, in GCSE examinations, the number of pupils achieving the higher grades A-C was very low, but the number gaining grades A-G was below average. Girls performed better than boys. Both were low compared with the national average. In comparison with similar schools, performance at the higher grades was very low, but the number achieving A*-G grades was above average.
120. Inspection evidence indicates that attainment is well below average, but higher than reported in national tests and examinations in 2000. In all years, high attaining pupils and a few average attaining pupils show sound knowledge and understanding across all Programmes of Study and demonstrate accurate use of scientific ideas such as ecosystems, earth science, energy resources, light and sound energy, reproduction, food chains and factors affecting rates of chemical reaction. Most pupils show confidence in setting up experiments, making observations and recording results but standards of scientific enquiry are below average. Pupils are beginning to use good practical experiences to understand scientific concepts and to consider the importance of planning and evaluating evidence. Lower attaining pupils, in all years, enjoy practical tasks but are less secure in their understanding of scientific ideas.
121. The department has made determined efforts to improve pupils' standards. New courses have been introduced in all years and an effective literacy strategy is beginning to make a difference to pupils' understanding of science. The introduction of carefully planned revision programmes is helping pupils to reach higher standards, but there is still wide variation in pupils' module results in Years 10 and 11. The poor attendance of a significant minority depresses examination and test results. Parents rightly expressed concern about the impact of supply teachers on pupils' attainment. A turbulent period of teacher shortage has had a profound adverse effect.
122. The work of the department on literacy is having a very positive effect on the writing of pupils' personal accounts of their experiments. Pupils summarise scientific findings well, but most find it difficult to analyse information and present good arguments for why things happen. The most able pupils in Year 9 present good quality extended writing, using the computer to present a wide range of arguments for how the world began. In Year 11 the quality of course work has improved as a result of good drafting and redrafting of written work. Pupils do not speak readily with confidence, but improve when teachers clarify the meaning of terms and encourage them to express ideas clearly. Pupils have frequent opportunities to apply mathematical skills. In Year 9, pupils calculate force and pressure and present information using line graphs. Higher attaining pupils show sufficient competence. Those in Year 11 manipulate mathematical equations appropriately, showing accurate answers when calculating numerical findings such as pressure, speed and electrical resistance. Standards of information and communication technology are below average, because pupils do not use computers often enough as an integral part of science teaching. However, Year 9 pupils use the Internet successfully, reporting the differences between light and sound energy to the class. Standards of scientific enquiry are below average, but pupils

are beginning to use good practical experiences and to consider the importance of planning and evaluating evidence.

123. Achievement is satisfactory. Most pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school because teachers are raising their expectations. In Year 11, higher attaining pupils apply their attention to study diligently. Average and lower attaining pupils show wide variation between what they achieve in final examination results. Individual pupils also show wide variation in module results. Many find aspects of physics difficult. Some do not persevere with a problem and this affects examination results. Pupils who speak English as a second language make good progress. Those with special educational needs make good progress when supported. Excellent support for those in Year 11 with impaired hearing results in very good progress, in line with their peers. Others make unsatisfactory progress because learning targets are not fully assessed by class teachers, making it difficult to ensure good progress over time.
124. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In all lessons observed, except one, teaching was satisfactory or better, with a number of very good lessons. The very best lessons are lively, have a fast pace with plenty of variety and teachers have high expectations, creating frequent opportunities for pupils to learn more independence and take responsibility for their own learning. Pupils in Year 9 grasp the difficult idea of reflection and absorption of light because they use different coloured filters to investigate the problem and then engage in very good class discussion. Year 7 pupils are efficient and well organised in preparing a thin slice of onion to view cells under the microscope, but work too slowly in showing the difference between plant and animal cells.
125. Teachers know their subject very well and have good understanding of pupils' language needs. Clear explanations promote a good response from pupils, as in a Year 10 lesson, when pupils participated in good discussion of chemical patterns. Good ideas for improving writing and recording skills include the use of cartoon drawings, poems and writing frames to support pupils who have difficulties. In a revision lesson, Year 11 pupils improved their study skills because the teacher took time to show them the value of a flow chart, engaging them in valuable discussion of how the structure of plants relates to purpose. Teachers use key words effectively to reinforce and extend pupils' vocabulary. When younger pupils read aloud, they gain confidence in their ability to understand ideas in science. However, they also require very good quality visual images and this is more variable between lessons. In a Year 8 lesson, pupils talked about metal ores as a result of reading from text, but missed a good opportunity to see a video clip to show how extraction from rocks occurs.
126. The use of assessment to reinforce learning is variable. In the most successful lessons, teachers use very good resources to engage pupils in active tasks in order to reinforce earlier learning. The quality of marking is variable. At best it provides pupils with good guidance about where they need to improve, but some is no more than a cursory acknowledgement of completion of work. Where pupils do not complete unfinished work, their books are unhelpful for them as a learning tool. The quality of monitoring pupils' progress is variable. All teachers are supportive as pupils work individually or in groups, but those who influence pupils' learning the most use this time to challenge and extend further pupils' understanding, rectifying misconceptions or errors. Teachers use resources well. Where teachers have computerised equipment and use it effectively for presentation, pupils make very good progress. Excellent planning and presentation skills help Year 8 pupils to gain a very good grasp of chemical reactions.
127. Teachers foster positive attitudes, establishing good relationships and dealing sensitively with those few older pupils who challenge them. A small number of Year 11 boys determinedly resisted the teachers' persuasion and wasted time by arguing the purpose of a helpful revision task set. In one lesson the teacher was unsuccessful in managing the learning of pupils in Year 8 and this led to unsatisfactory behaviour.
128. The department fully reflects the determination of the school to raise standards. Good leadership has resulted in a team with a strong commitment to succeed in this task, evident from the good emphasis on literacy and the decision to change to more appropriate courses in all years. The school's system for recording information to show pupils' academic progress over time is beginning to be used successfully to identify the needs of different groups of pupils and the team is now in a good position to refine lesson planning further, to take full account of the very wide range of pupils' needs. They need to set targets for improvement by further developing ways of teaching that will raise boys' attainment. Pupils need to use computers in classrooms more systematically as a tool to raise standards further.

ART AND DESIGN

129. Pupils' attainment in art and design, by the age of 14, is in line with national expectations. By the end of Year 9, standards have risen, mainly owing to good teaching. Pupils have an increasing knowledge of the use of a range of media and techniques. By age 16, in Year 11, standards are below the average expected for their age. However, evidence during inspection shows pupils in Year 10 to be moving towards average levels of attainment. GCSE results in 2000 were below average. Across the school teaching supports effectively the evaluation and development of techniques. This has a positive impact on pupils' learning and consolidation of their knowledge of the work of the artists they study. They use this knowledge successfully to develop the design and composition elements of their work. Tasks are matched carefully to the pupils' discerned strengths and weaknesses. Across the school, pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make very good progress, in line with their peers.
130. When exploring how the impressionists develop their pictures, pupils in Year 9 achieved average standards of attainment. Supported by excellent teaching, they learned very effectively how to draw their images using black and white photographs. The teacher analysed with them a range of completed work in an impressionist style. This enabled the pupils to apply very successfully their learnt techniques of colour mixing and application to their own work. Here they show a very good appreciation of, and interpretation of, the style of the artist they are studying.
131. Pupils continue to achieve well up to the age of 16. Their learning is very well supported by the teachers' careful preparation of a sequence of lessons influenced by the good use of assessment information to guide their curricular planning. An example of this was seen in a Year 11 lesson, where the teacher had prepared an excellent, supportive ICT programme to support the pupils' preparation for their forthcoming GCSE examination. This included a wide range of samples of artists' work, which they could use competently. Pupils of all ages are very well supported with the provision of a very good computer suite and a good range of commercial and prepared programmes by their teachers, to meet their discerned needs.
132. Teaching across all years never falls below good and is sometimes very good or excellent. Schemes and programmes of work are very well prepared in advance to support pupils' learning and they receive good levels of support as the lessons proceed. Sketchbooks are used effectively to support the developing evaluation and progression of their work. However, pupils sometimes forget their sketchbooks and leave them at home. Sketchbooks support the satisfactory homework that is frequently set by teachers. However, pupils are insufficiently encouraged to finish off uncompleted work. Marking rewards effort satisfactorily and suggests how they might progress in their work.
133. The teachers support, to a high degree, the pupils' awareness of a wide range of artists. The pupils having their own copies of the artist's work to evaluate and analyse always supports work illustrating their various styles. A good example was seen in a Year 8 lesson, where the pupils showed a good knowledge of the work of Georgia O'Keefe and applied this to their present work. The teacher's giving a good introductory analysis of the work of Juan Gris enhanced the pupils' knowledge of the cubist style of painting.
134. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. They use the time they have for the subject effectively. They work at a good pace, with high levels of enthusiasm and interest, discussing their work with a satisfactory awareness. The timetabling of work for Year 10 in single periods is insufficient. They need a double period, as Year 11 have to support the commencement and progress of their GCSE work.
135. The three available rooms in the art department are well organised and resources are satisfactory. Good displays support and celebrate pupils' achievements. Pupils benefit from a very good, well equipped information and communication technology room. Despite having a kiln in a small kiln room, there is no suitable accommodation for work with clay. Accommodation to some extent also limits three-dimensional work, which is at present underdeveloped.
136. The management of the subject is very good and the head of department, through excellent levels of teamwork amongst her colleagues, has a clear, relevant vision for the further development of the subject. This has an impact on the rising standards seen. Pupils' literacy skills are suitably

developed with the consistent use and explanation of keywords associated with the work pupils are studying. Insufficient attention is given to the development of numeracy skills.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

137. Pupils come to the school with little understanding of design and technology and limited making skills. In lessons and work seen, standards in Years 7-9 are well below the national average though for most pupils this represents good progress over these years. Pupils demonstrate stronger making skills when compared with design and other written folder work. This is particularly evident in food technology, where they work with increasing confidence and independence in experimenting with different methods and producing food products. Pupils know about different processes and techniques such as moulding plastic and printing on textiles and are able to use tools with some accuracy to cut, shape and join different materials. Most use computers with confidence, with higher attaining pupils showing stronger graphical skills and information and communications technology skills. Those pupils use their skills well to illustrate their design ideas using computer aided design applications. However, in general, pupils have a limited awareness of a design and make process and less well developed knowledge of the key words in the subject. Literacy skills are quite limited for many and this is reflected in the restricted amount of extended writing. Most pupils are able to measure materials when supported, though skills in estimating required materials are weak. The generally good teaching and improving schemes of work help pupils develop their knowledge and skills significantly in Years 7-9, in spite of limited curriculum time. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are able to complete the structured written tasks and drawing activities, the higher attaining pupils showing clear improvement of their literacy skills.
138. In the latest GCSE results pupils performed well below the national average, with 25 per cent gaining grades A*-C compared with 50 per cent nationally. Girls achieved significantly better than boys in the different design and technology courses. A small proportion of pupils was not entered for the examination, mainly because poor attendance resulted in non-completion of coursework. However, of those pupils entered, over 90 percent gained graded results, only a little below the national level. Overall, pupils achieved a little better in design and technology when compared with their performance in other GCSE courses. There were no opportunities to observe Year 11 pupils during the inspection, but in Year 10 lessons and in work seen from both Years, standards are broadly in line with the results of the previous year. In project work in the different courses, the higher attaining pupils demonstrate good research skills, with an increasing use of Internet sources, and in graphic products for example, those pupils present their design ideas well. In the areas of food, textiles and resistant materials, post pupils have a secure range of practical making skills evident in good quality outcomes. Pupils are less able to document a design and make process and in part this is related to weaker than average literacy skills. Some well-motivated pupils with special educational needs make considerably better than expected progress.
139. Pupils like the practical making activities and do their best, though some written folder work shows little care. A minority is less attentive on occasion but in most cases pupils respond well to confident and firm class management and overall behaviour is good. Relationships in lessons are positive and pupils with varied educational needs and capabilities work well together.
140. Teaching is good overall. In lessons seen, half of the teaching was good and a further quarter was very good. The rest of the teaching was satisfactory except in one lesson where it was unsatisfactory. The design and technology teachers share an enthusiasm for the subject and have wider than average knowledge and flexibility to teach across a number of specialist areas. The pupils benefit in terms of gaining informed support and, in many cases, an established rapport with particular staff. Strong and positive class management that is reflected in teachers' high expectations of behaviour and quality of work typifies the very good teaching. Lessons are varied and well planned and enable pupils to make good progress in developing their understanding and skills. This was well illustrated in a graphic products lesson in Year 10 where the teacher used computers to explore different design ideas and demonstrate computer aided manufacture. In this instance the pupils were able to develop their own ideas and appreciate how their final product could be made. Most teaching is structured effectively and pupils with special educational needs, or for whom English is an additional language, are able to develop their understanding of the subject through the high levels of additional class support. Marking is done regularly, with frequent constructive comments, though pupils are not always clear about what they need to do

to improve in relation to National Curriculum levels of attainment. Most teachers are effective in managing behaviour and are aware of the needs of different pupils, though on one occasion, inexperience resulted in a teacher not ensuring that the more challenging pupils made sufficient progress in a lesson. Teachers use effectively the new work schemes to motivate the pupils and maintain their concentration in what are often very long lessons.

141. Management of the subject is good. The co-ordinator recognises the strengths of colleagues and provides effective and enabling leadership. The cohesive team has made good progress in developing new and more detailed lesson schemes. Resources and accommodation are mostly good particularly in the way the workrooms are organised around a central information and communications technology suite. The subject makes a major contribution to the school and standards can be further raised by improvements in staffing involved as well as curriculum and assessment practice.

GEOGRAPHY

142. Standards of attainment at the end of Year 9, as assessed by the school, were well below those of pupils in similar schools. In 2000, the proportion of GCSE grades A*-C was well below the national average although above the school's average. The proportion of GCSE grades A*-G was below average and when the results are compared with pupils from similar schools pupils were less successful. Girls achieved better than boys and gained two A* grades.
143. Overall, in Years 7 to 11 achievement is unsatisfactory. In Years 7-9 the standard of work in lessons and in the work seen is a slightly below what it should be in Year 9 and below in Year 8. The humanities course in Year 7 promotes higher standards than the pupils' low attainment reflects on entry. This is due to the teaching of experienced senior staff who are sensitive to the diverse individual needs of pupils. They encourage them to gain the maximum benefit from lessons. Higher attaining pupils often speak in full sentences and often with good vocabulary, as when in a Year 9 group pupils described the tropical rain forest as 'stunning' and 'beautiful'. Pupils link their ideas effectively with previous work and write clear and concise tabulation notes in preparation for extended writing. However, lower attaining pupils do not record their information as clearly. In Years 7 and 8 there are differences between the teaching groups. Where standards are higher, Year 8 pupils described clearly the effects of the Kobi earthquake and reached a good level of knowledge and understanding to identify the key issues whilst a pupil with special needs introduced and accurately explained the meaning of 'isolated'. Throughout Years 7-9 there is good use of ICT particularly in Year 7. Often, there are too few opportunities for the application of number and shape.
144. In Years 10 and 11, pupils study for GCSE geography or humanities. Information technology skills are competent. For example, in a Year 10 lesson pupils used the Internet and the school network, and prepared group presentations to explain the changes in the Brazilian rain forest. With support, a profoundly deaf pupil was able to participate fully in a video and discussion lesson. In Year 11, higher attaining GCSE pupils understand the reasons for the decline in the coal industry and the changing employment patterns arising from foreign investment into the manufacturing industries. The work of lower attaining pupils concentrated on the use of basic geographical skills. Geographical enquiries make very good use of the local environment and bi-polar analysis to compare the impact of investment and the improvement in the quality of life in an area of urban regeneration. Tally charts are converted into appropriate bar and pie charts.
145. The quality of teaching was good or better in 70 per cent of the lessons observed in Years 7-9. Only on one occasion was teaching unsatisfactory. The teaching is consistently good or very good in Years 10 and 11. The specialist subject knowledge and understanding promote good and very good learning in many lessons. Pupils in Year 9 empathised very well with the difficulties of survival in a tropical rain forest. Generally, lesson planning is thorough and consistent. It is presented to the group through the network. The very clear screen presentations have a positive impact on learning and progress - for example, when a Year 7 group considers how to question the multi-cultural nature of Britain. Good study skills are encouraged. Frequently, pupils benefit from collecting information in mixed ability groups. They draft and redraft their information into successful individual and extended written work. Pupils in Year 10 make very good progress. They are challenged to prepare computerized presentations on the impact of change in the Amazon Forest. Generally the management of pupils is firm and consistent. However, where the lesson preparation is insufficient to challenge the pupils in Year 8 and their immature behaviour is

accepted, teaching is unsatisfactory.

146. Support teachers and assistants provide very good support for pupils who are profoundly deaf, those who have English as an additional language and for pupils with severe learning difficulties. The gifted and talented pupils in Year 7, are set demanding tasks- for example, they follow a thinking skills programme for accelerated learning. However, on occasion more detailed dialogue is needed between the class teacher and the support teacher.
147. The geography departmental team is strong and effective. It is very well led and managed by the head of faculty. There is innovative curriculum development in the use of information technology and new courses. The monitoring of classroom practice is at an early stage. However, there are examples of good practice and standards are improving.

HISTORY

148. Standards attained by 16-year-olds pupils, as shown in the GCSE results, are well below national averages. The GCSE results for 2000 indicate that the percentage of pupils achieving at both the higher A*-C grades (30per cent) and A*-G grades (86 per cent) are well below the national standards of 58per cent and 97per cent respectively. The average point score per pupil is 3.1 compared with a national average of 4.7. The achievement of girls is above that of boys by the age of 16. The attainment of pupils by the age of 14, as assessed by the teachers, is well below that expected of pupils of a similar age. The number of pupils achieving at the higher levels is also below expectations. A significant number of pupils who fail to complete examination coursework or who absent themselves from school have an adverse effect on the overall standards of achievement at 16.
149. Standards of achievement in lessons observed during inspection are below expectations of pupils of a similar age in Year 9. In Year 7 pupils study history as part of a humanities course. They know about the settlers that have come to Britain since 1066 and understand that Britain has always been made up of people from different cultures. In Year 8 pupils identified some of the causes of the English Civil War and could arrange those causes in an order of importance. In Year 9 pupils recognise that stereotyping images of people connected with the Holocaust can be misleading. They recognise that the victims, perpetrators and bystanders are not always easy to identify. In doing this they reflect upon and assess the significance of photographs as historical evidence.
150. By the age of 16, the standards of achievement in lessons seen during the inspection were below national expectations. Pupils achieve satisfactorily according to their capabilities. Pupils understand ideas better than they can communicate in the written form. Higher attainers in Year 10 achieve standards higher than those expected of pupils of a similar age. A small number of higher attaining pupils are being entered early for GCSE examinations. Also, pupils with special educational needs achieve above expectations. In Year 10 pupils identify some of the reasons why Hitler managed to gain control in Germany in the 1930s. They begin to understand the use of propaganda through control of the press and at mass rallies. In Year 11 lower attaining pupils recognise the steps Hitler took to gain power in Germany in the 1930s. They used this information to make a short presentation using computers.
151. The behaviour of most pupils is good. Almost all are polite, attentive and respond well to the demands made by the teachers. Pupils listen attentively and, when asked, participate fully in discussions in lessons. Presentation in most pupils' books is satisfactory, although in a significant number of books headings are not included and writing is in different coloured inks. Pupils' writing is limited and sentences lack development. However, the higher attaining pupils achieve very good standards of presentation and their written work is well structured and developed. There are a few opportunities for the pupils to develop numeracy skills through the use of chronology. Good use is made of computers to word process work and this is particularly helpful to pupils with special educational needs. In a small number of classes, especially in Year 9, a few pupils disrupt lessons. The irregular attendance of a significant number of pupils in all years impedes their achievement.
152. Teaching is satisfactory, overall. In nearly all lessons observed it was satisfactory and better. In Years 7 and 8, teaching is usually satisfactory and good. In Year 9 it is satisfactory, sometimes good and occasionally unsatisfactory. In Year 10 and 11, teaching is very good. Teachers share

an enthusiasm and a commitment to obtain the best from their pupils. They provide challenge in lessons for pupils of all abilities. There is a constructive rapport between teachers and their pupils and pupils of all abilities are very well supported in learning. Teachers develop the basic skills of literacy very well. Pupils are guided in their writing so they can write at increasing length. They learn to structure their writing so that they express and develop their ideas. The higher achieving pupils write well. Pupils are encouraged to become familiar with words related to the subject. Lower achieving pupils are likewise helped through more structured writing. Teachers are knowledgeable about their subject and they handle sensitive issues like the Holocaust effectively so that pupils are encouraged to challenge stereotypes and reflect on their feelings towards events.

153. In the unsatisfactory lessons teachers were unfamiliar with the subject requirements and so did not explain clearly to pupils. Classroom management is unsure and so time is spent calming the class at the expense of challenging their learning. Pupils are given few opportunities to discuss their work and so to develop their spoken language. This limits the progress made by pupils with English as an additional language.
154. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in and outside of lessons. The school has a wide range of such pupils and a very good system of support. Education communicator supports effectively pupils with impaired hearing. Those with behavioural difficulties and with severe learning difficulties are well supported. All these teachers liaise effectively with mainstream teachers, and this helps the very good inclusion of all pupils.
155. Teachers evaluate and record regularly the achievements of pupils to ensure that pupils produce work of an acceptable standard. Regular assessments are used to raise the expectations of pupils by providing them with challenges to aspire to. In Years 7, 8 and 9 termly tests ensure that pupils are informed about their progress. In Years 10 and 11 pupils are set realistic targets, which raise their expectations. However, all teachers, in Years 7, 8 and 9, do not commonly conform to these standards and so standards of individual teachers can vary.
156. The management of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic, committed to raising expectations and standards and is beginning to establish some very good practices. The co-ordinator leads by example. There is a strong and realistic emphasis on using literacy skills to raise the standards in history. There is imaginative use of information technology to involve pupils in their learning. The monitoring of teaching is not sufficient to ensure common standards, especially in Years 7, 8 and 9. Planning of lessons in Years 10 and 11 ensures consistency of standards and of expected results. The standards of planning in Year 9 are not consistent across all classes and this is a weakness. Work is not always set to match the abilities of all pupils within a group. Also, the opportunities for developing spoken language are not always used and so pupils with lower literacy skills do not become familiar with the language of the subject. However, the co-ordinator has clear and relevant priorities established in the development plans and the strategies introduced have not yet had enough time to make an impact on the attainment of pupils. In order to raise attainment the department should match tasks more closely to pupils' learning needs, improve planning to ensure consistent standards across years and monitor teaching through a system of lesson observations to ensure consistency across Years 7, 8 and 9.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

157. While the overall standards of attainment and achievement are below average they are improving rapidly, particularly in Years 7-9. The teacher assessments at the age of 14 show that one-half of pupils attain the expected standard. This is a satisfactory achievement in relation to the attainment of pupils on entry to the school. Girls perform significantly better than boys. Attainment in lessons is always in line with national expectations and some times above. Pupils from different ethnic groups perform equally in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated into lessons and generally progress satisfactorily in relation to their prior attainment. Insufficient curriculum time is available for the subject in Years 7-9.
158. In Year 7 pupils satisfactorily learn to use word processors, spreadsheets, databases, graphics and desktop publishing. They are also introduced to the Internet and e-mail but more work is needed in these areas to prepare pupils more adequately to undertake research in later Years. In Years 8 and 9 pupils undertake further satisfactory applications in lessons in art; design and

technology; and in English, humanities, mathematics, modern foreign languages, personal, health and social education, religious education and science. Pupils satisfactorily learn computer control and data logging in these lessons and have many good opportunities to apply and practise word processing, desktop publishing and multimedia presentations. However, these applications are largely as a result of the interest and at the discretion of individual teachers; there is no systematic teaching of the subject in these years. Most aspects of the National Curriculum are covered to some extent but more needs to be done to cover it fully. Particularly more work is needed in the National Curriculum section on breadth of study.

159. At the end of Year 9 pupils' work is judged by the ICT co-ordinator, in conjunction with teachers where necessary, and attainment is assessed satisfactorily against National Curriculum levels. These levels of attainment are satisfactorily reported to parents in the end-of-year reports. The department is reviewing the method of assessment in order to make it more objective and less dependent upon personal knowledge of pupils.
160. Overall, attainment in Years 10-11 is below average because there is no planned or co-ordinated provision of lessons for over one-half of the pupils. The school has well-developed plans to improve the curriculum. Last year one in seven pupils took the GCSE course in information and communications technology and only one-half of them obtained the higher A*-C grades, a result which is well below the national average. In Year 10, 25 per cent of pupils are taking a recently introduced GNVQ course in information and communications technology and early signs are that this is very successful. In the first examination of Unit 1, 'Presenting Information', over 80 per cent of pupils passed, a result which is well above the national average. A further 25 per cent of pupils takes GNVQ courses in business studies, leisure and tourism or health and social care. While these courses do not fully cover the national requirements in information and communication technology they offer considerable opportunity to apply the subject and are adding significantly to the achievement of those who take them.
161. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 have unsatisfactory opportunities to learn information and communications technology in other GCSE courses. Whilst many of the applications in design and technology, humanities, mathematics, music and science are good, they are largely as a result of the interest and at the discretion of individual teachers and pupils and do not collectively cover the national requirements in the subject. Last year 30 pupils, including 10 disapplied pupils, took the Computer Literacy and Information Technology (CLAIT) skills tests in word processing, spreadsheets and databases. All passed the word processing test and two-thirds of those entered obtained passes in all three skills areas, a satisfactory result in relation to the prior attainment of the pupils. This year 30 pupils have been entered for the Pitman's Test Production Skills in French and 30 have been entered for the same test in German. The school's arrangements in Years 10 and 11 do not meet either the aims of the school or national requirements.
162. The teaching of the subject is a strength and is good, overall. Teachers have great enthusiasm for the subject, which is well communicated to and appreciated by pupils. Lessons are well planned and teachers give good and challenging introductions to the work, use question and answer sessions effectively, involve pupils in a lively way, give good demonstrations, maintain an appropriate pace, exercise good class control and give good support to those who need help. The use of interactive electronic white-boards in many teaching areas greatly improves learning and the pace of lessons. All specialist teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject. Teachers in other subjects who apply information and communications technology do not always have the knowledge or confidence to be completely successful. However, help is readily available, particularly in the Learning Resource Centre, where a number of teachers normally work simultaneously. The school has an ambitious and good programme for training teachers. In the past twelve months 25 teachers have been trained by the Institute of Education with funding provided by the National Opportunities Fund. Twelve other teachers have applied for the Computers for Teachers scheme. The network manager has also provided in-service training for other teachers and administrators.
163. There is good use of ICT to aid the learning of pupils with special educational needs and disapplied pupils. The school supports the learning of these pupils through the good use of Advanced Learning Systems in mathematics and science and the 'Future School' programme in mathematics. Fifteen pupils who had been disapplied from French were observed satisfactorily using these and other learning programmes in a learning support lesson. Other highlights of the lessons observed included the production of a leaflet in Year 7, the use of Future School programme at National Curriculum levels 5 and 6 in a mathematics lesson in Year 8, use of CD -

ROM to investigate anti-Jewish law in Germany during the 1930's and 40's, learning to construct a database in a business studies lesson in Year 10, investigating ways to improve the performance of athletes in a physical education lesson in Year 11 and the use of digital photography in an art lesson in Year 11.

164. The excellent computer network contains 16 Microsoft Window NT servers and over 450 terminals. The ratio of pupils to terminals is 2.75:1, a ratio which is well above the national average. The greatest concentration of terminals is in the innovative Learning Resource Centre; most of the discrete lessons take place in this Centre. There is good open access to most of these facilities outside normal school hours. The subject is co-ordinated by an able, enthusiastic and experienced teacher who also has responsibility for the library. A well-qualified network manager and his assistant support her. The ICT Co-ordinator's wide range of teaching and other duties do not give her sufficient time to co-ordinate the subject properly and additional help with co-ordination is needed. There is no cross-curricular ICT group but the ICT Co-ordinator does attend most staff meeting in other departments. There are no procedures to review regularly the quality of provision including the software within each subject.
165. The school has made rapid progress since its inception 18 months ago. To progress further the school should introduce a broader curriculum to cover the National Curriculum requirements for all pupils, continue to seek ways to improve attainment, seek ways to help the ICT co-ordinator to undertake the co-ordination of the subject more fully and establish an ICT group to oversee future curriculum and other developments.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

166. At the ages of 14 and 16, pupils reach standards well below average but in line with their prior attainment, considering their low attainment on entry to the school. In 2000, the proportion of pupils assessed by their teachers as working at the nationally expected level at the age of 14 was well below average and this was confirmed by work seen during the inspection.
167. Results in GCSE examinations in 2000 were far below the national average for the proportion of pupils gaining A*-C grades in French and in German they were even lower. At grades A*-G, the percentage achieving a pass grade was below the national level in French and well below in German.
168. In work seen during the inspection at age 14, standards in listening, speaking, reading and writing are all below average. Standards are affected adversely by the lack of appropriate books, particularly in French. This means that pupils do not have enough opportunities to read French or listen to authentic language often enough. Erratic attendance by a number of pupils is another factor in low standards. Over a period of time standards have also been affected by staff changes that have led to inconsistent teaching. Speaking skills are underdeveloped because teachers expect short replies to questions. Opportunities for conversations are limited, but in some classes pupils do role-play work on familiar topics. By Year 9, most pupils can understand and use basic French to describe themselves and where they live. Higher attaining pupils include use of the past tense in their writing, but in general progress in writing is slow. Progress in lessons is always at least satisfactory, except for those who are gifted and talented. These pupils lack sufficient opportunities and extension work to reach the highest standards. Progress over time is less good because it is affected by erratic attendance. There is no difference in the standards of boys and girls.
169. In work seen during the inspection, some higher attaining pupils studying French are able, at the age of 16, to express themselves well in writing. Writing is less good in German because the marking gives less guidance on how to improve. Pupils lack confidence in speaking, which does not feature significantly in most lessons. The exception to this is the Unit Award Scheme, where there is very good practice. The lack of resources means that because pupils cannot take books home, they are not able to develop independent research skills. Reading material is very limited and listening material is not always appropriately linked to ability. Progress in lessons is satisfactory for most pupils, although gifted and talented pupils are not sufficiently challenged. Again, progress over time is affected by unsatisfactory attendance.
170. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. In 20 per cent of lessons observed it is good or very good. One factor that influences the quality of teaching is the insufficient use of the foreign language.

Pupils do not hear enough French and German for these to be effective languages of communication in class. Although teachers prepare their lessons conscientiously they do not at present plan work to meet the needs of groups of pupils of differing ability. As a result, higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently stretched. The best lessons have a range of activities that cover the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. A very good Year 10 French lesson enabled pupils to make very good progress in their learning because it was carefully planned, with a good variety of activities in the four skills. It was conducted at a brisk pace and gave pupils the chance to consolidate work they had done before. Pupils took their work seriously, practised their pronunciation enthusiastically in role-play activities, and gained a real sense of achievement. Their behaviour was very good and they appreciated the effort their teacher had gone to in preparing an interesting presentation using the interactive whiteboard. However, progress in a Year 8 lesson was only satisfactory because the pupils were unable to transfer skills. The cassette player produced poor quality sound and the teacher had to read the transcript. During the lesson, speaking was not developed as much as it could have been and higher attaining pupils did not have any extension work. Behaviour is always well managed by language teachers. Teachers use assessments at the end of units of work to judge the progress their pupils are making. This is linked to National Curriculum levels. Marking is completed regularly but does not usually give enough indication about what pupils know and can do and what they need to do to improve. Pupils have a good awareness of the levels at which they are estimated to be working. There is good use of ICT, and this works well to stimulate and motivate pupils

171. The quality of learning is satisfactory throughout the school, with the exception of gifted and talented pupils in Years 7-9. Pupils with English as an additional language make progress in line with their ability. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to others when they are not withdrawn from language lessons. There is no difference in the learning of boys and girls. In some classes pupils are withdrawn for half the lessons and this makes it difficult for the class as a whole to make progress. There is some movement of pupils from the French side of the Year group to the German side, and vice versa, in Years 7-9. This adversely affects their learning and creates problems of lack of continuity. This is unsatisfactory and needs to be rectified. The poor attendance of pupils affects learning over time.
172. Pupils show interest in their work, and have a positive attitude to it. They are well behaved in lessons and enjoy good relationships with their teachers. Homework is regularly set but not often completed on time and this affects the rate at which pupils make progress. The lack of books means that these cannot usually be taken home, and as a result pupils do not have adequate opportunities to develop independent learning skills. This is especially detrimental to gifted and talented pupils.
173. Management of the department is very good. The head of department has made many innovative changes and improvements since his appointment just over a year ago. He has clear plans and has improved attitudes to languages in the school. The whole department is committed to improving standards. A major factor hindering faster improvement is the lack of appropriate and varied resources, particularly in Years 7-9. There is enthusiastic use of modern technology among teachers and this is providing a real impetus to learning. Visits to France and Germany are organised to widen the horizons of pupils. There is very good potential for improvement.

MUSIC

174. GCSE results in music are well below the national averages compared with similar schools for grades A* -C, A*-G and average points scores. Attainment in lessons and other work seen in school is at the national average in Years 7-11. The difference between these two measures is because pupils in the school are rarely performing musicians at any reasonable standard – and even those with such skills rarely opt for music at GCSE. Background musical knowledge and experience is also weak, which depresses performance in the GCSE listening test. In addition, because we cannot take account of trends over time, the small numbers undermine the significance of examination results in music. Some very good work was seen by pupils in Years 9, 10 and 11- they used a computer based sequencing programme very effectively. The Year 9 pupils were using this software for the first time, improvising melodies against pre-recorded material in the *Pachelbel Canon / Ground Bass* project, and effective counter-melodies were already being created after less than twenty minutes. Year 10 and 11 pupils were composing multi-layered pieces using cross rhythms and sequences of chords and discords to create effective pieces of music. The Year 8 pop-style group, which gave its first public performance during the week of inspection, to an audience of Year 7 pupils and teachers, was performing well in a stylistically appropriate way.
175. Only 28 pupils receive instrumental tuition. The school is considering ways in which this might be subsidised to increase access to this important extension to the curriculum. A hundred and twenty pupils take part in musically based extra-curricular activities, including theatrical productions jointly with the drama department – most recently a production of *Annie*. There are also regular visiting artists in residence provision, expanding the musical opportunities provided by the school. The musical life of the community around the school is not used. Pupils with special educational needs have full access to the curriculum, and attain at least as well as others, and the way in which purely musical input in addition to verbal input is provided maximises access for those with English as an additional language, who are seen to attain well. Overall, the music curriculum is fully inclusive in nature.
176. Teaching and learning are both good throughout the school. The most effective teaching happens when the enthusiasm, passion and commitment of teachers are communicated to pupils, who respond with equal commitment and excitement, and a great enthusiasm for learning. Teaching and learning are characterised by very good planning and preparation, linked to clear targets which are shared with pupils, and criteria for success established. Pupils' self-assessment against these criteria is part of every project, and pupils are able to evaluate their own success. The use of information and communications technology as both a teaching and learning tool is very effective, and is an important element in music's success. Relationships are excellent, and pupils very well known, and as a consequence they feel secure. Organisation and management are good, and space, time and resources well used. Teaching styles help pupils to make maximum use of their abilities. Pupils learn by listening and analysis, by experiment and by trial and error, through skill development, by selection and rejection- especially in IT based composition work, and learn by doing and refining their skills.
177. Pupils' response is very good throughout the school. Pupils' attitudes are open and positive, and they are keen to succeed. They tend to be over-aware of their own limitations, and their self esteem needs to be regularly boosted by teachers. When working with computers, pupils are able to take risks, since they do not see the machine as a threat. In most lessons there is a sense of corporate intent. Pupils listen intently, and in the best lessons fun and hard work are closely linked. Even the most restless Year 9 pupils responded well to teachers, and the keyboard *demo button* was not touched, a significant indicator of good pupil attitudes. Overall there is a very good working atmosphere.
178. The curriculum meets all the National Curriculum requirements, and takes full account of Curriculum 2000 developments. The new attainment target levels are being integrated into the departmental assessment system, which is very thorough and detailed and linked to the set criteria for each project, with effective links into reporting. ICT is a very positive feature of the curriculum as both a teaching and a learning tool. Although multi-cultural music forms part of the curriculum in Years 7-9, it is not fully integrated at all levels. Accommodation and resources are excellent, and very well used; staffing is very good at the moment. Leadership in music is excellent. It is very efficient, and there is an effective policy to raise standards, which has had a positive effect on the quality of pupils' work. The staff involved in music, which includes instrumental teachers and support workers in lessons in all years, as well as the mainstream

teaching staff, work as a team. Since there is often team teaching in the department, informal monitoring of teaching and learning is good, and will be formalised as performance management is established later this year

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

179. In 2000, 3.8 per cent of pupils gained A*- C passes in GCSE . This is very low compared with the national average of 50.7per cent. There are, however, clear signs that this very low performance will not be repeated. In 2000, a group of 15 pupils from the present Year 11 took the examination at the end of their Year 10 and, of these, 7 gained A*-C grades. Teachers' predictions for 2001 indicate that 38 per cent of the remaining pupils will achieve these grades.
180. By the end of Year 9 practical attainment in lessons is always satisfactory but more often good. All pupils attain well, including those with special educational needs and English as a second language. Boys in Year 7 make good progress in developing the lay-up shot in basketball, the great majority of the class meeting with good levels of success. Pupils' efforts are greatly assisted by adjustable baskets, which accommodate both those of different physique and levels of skill. Year 7 boys also refine passing skills in basketball. Year 8 boys and girls show satisfactory levels of skill in hockey and netball respectively, boys competing well both in skill practices and small-sided games showing good stick control. Girls show satisfactory passing skills in both netball and soccer but often lack timing and awareness about how to move off the ball.
181. In examinations at the end of Year 11, results in the school's first year were disappointing but there are definite signs of improvement. Now the best of pupils' written work is very good and reflects considerable application and determination. Some are making very good use of ICT to complete homework. Work is being thoroughly marked and teachers are indicating how to improve performances. In lessons where the teaching is excellent pupils are made to think carefully and many pupils, boys and girls, raise really searching questions and produce interesting observations. In a GCSE lesson about the classifications of body types these qualities clearly emerged and were well reinforced by the teacher. Where pupils are given responsibilities in lessons - for example in leading warm-up sessions - these are clearly accepted by both boys and girls, who accept tasks easily and unselfconsciously. When involved in warming-up the great majority shows understanding of the muscle groups involved in movements. However, knowledge about the effects of exercise on the cardio-vascular system is not so well developed. In a practical indoor GCSE athletics lesson Year 11 pupils, both boys and girls, made satisfactory progress in learning and performing different baton changing techniques.
182. Teaching, always satisfactory, is more often good and, occasionally it is very good or even excellent. Where it is excellent the teacher prepares in exemplary fashion and the lesson is taught by the most effective use of the latest technology, which ensures that pupils think clearly about their work. The teacher has high expectations of pupils and the lesson content is most carefully prepared and systematic in practice. Homework is also precisely structured so that guidance is sound and detailed. Pupils are advised carefully about how to research and present their work. In all lessons teachers had good subject knowledge, which they used confidently and enthusiastically. Questioning techniques are used effectively to make pupils plan and evaluate their work. There is also good provision for gifted and talented pupils. A weekend sports science course, run in conjunction with a local university, has been taught this year. The particular needs of all pupils are very carefully documented so that any particular needs are known and acted upon. Those with physical needs, and who are withdrawn from lessons, receive very good learning support.
183. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are always good in lessons. When teaching is excellent so are pupils' performances, with both boys and girls thinking clearly, asking relevant questions and keen to be involved. In all years boys, girls including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, enjoy physical education. They arrive promptly for lessons, change appropriately and participate enthusiastically. Few pupils sit out without good reason. Given opportunities to co-operate and collaborate, they do so effectively and easily. An air of purpose and enjoyment exists in most lessons. Teachers provide a good extra curricular programme with quite a number from outside the physical education department involved. Many pupils attend practices and represent the school in teams and competitions. There will be a skiing trip to the Alps this year with over fifty pupils enlisted.

184. Management is satisfactory but has been affected by the lack of a head of department since September 2000. Another member of staff who already has other responsibilities in the school is carrying the duties of this post. Although schemes of work have been redesigned, some important departmental policies are either still missing or under-developed. These include statements on pupils' personal development, teaching methods and assessment. The school experiences difficulties in recruiting staff and some supply teaching has had to be used, albeit in this case fairly stable and prolonged. This problem is, however, destined to recur at the end of the current term. Teachers work cohesively as a team and there is now a strong corporate spirit in the department. Administration of the department is good. Provision of a designated classroom for delivery of the examination courses would be a considerable help to the department. Provision for gifted and talented pupils is good. Students from initial teacher training courses speak highly of support received from the department. There is a designated computer, with printer, both of which are used very effectively. There is a good supply of reference materials for the GCSE course including books, videotapes, two CD Roms and a digital camera.
185. Although some facilities are excellent, most notably the sports hall, there are some severe difficulties with accommodation. The hard court areas, used very substantially for teaching of the games curriculum, are badly drained, hold surface water for long periods of time and already have substantial, deep cracks. Playing fields are too small. They have been out of commission since the school opened in 1999 because excessive stones make the surfaces dangerous.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

186. Attainment at the end of Years 9 and 11 is below the level expected by the locally Newham Agreed Syllabus. Results for GCSE are well below average.
187. In lessons and work seen during the inspection attainment in Years 7 to 9 was closer to being in line with expectations for 14 year olds. Progress through these Years is satisfactory and in some cases good. There are many good examples of pupils developing their knowledge and understanding of religious principles. Pupils make sense of what they are studying and can relate it to their experiences of themselves and others. Pupils in Year 8 were able to interpret biblical material, such as the story of the Garden of Eden, and could draw conclusions about responsibility. In Year 9 they begin to develop understanding of religious concepts such as freedom of choice. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress throughout these years and in some cases this is good. Overall, learning is good.
188. From the lessons observed and work seen of pupils in Years 10 and 11, attainment is lower than expected, especially in Year 11. Pupils in Year 11 demonstrated knowledge of the five pillars of Islam and were able to explain the meaning of key words such as Hajj, Salah and Tawhid. There was little evidence of critical analysis. In Year 10, progress is much better. Pupils are developing an understanding of religious concepts and there are good signs of the development of a problem solving approach to the work. They are beginning to consolidate their learning and develop values. Generally, good progress is being made. They could benefit further from a greater analytical approach to develop abstract thinking.
189. Overall, pupils' attitudes to learning are very good and in some cases excellent. They behave very well, are generally highly motivated and apply themselves well to the work. They collaborate well with and work at a productive pace. A very good rapport exists between pupils and teachers and pupils are supported well on a daily basis.
190. Teaching throughout the school is good, in some cases very good and occasionally excellent. This is a real strength of the department. Teachers are qualified specialists, secure in their knowledge of the subject and displaying confidence in the use of material and resources. Planning is good and aims of lessons are shared with pupils, placing the lesson firmly in the context of prior learning. They make good use of questioning, both to review previous work and consolidate current learning. Teachers use an appropriate range of styles that assist pupils to maintain their interest and develop understanding of religious principles and concepts. The use of video, text material and worksheets, some of which is very well prepared and well matched to pupils' prior attainment.

191. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well. Planning of work for pupils with different levels of ability is generally good, although high attaining pupils could be more set more demanding tasks. Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning cycle. The department has developed level descriptors and targets and they share these with pupils. They form a sound basis for the assessment of knowledge, understanding and evaluation. Some thought should be given to the assessment of attitudes, values and the spiritual dimension.
192. The curriculum for Years 7 - 9 is broad and balanced and meets the needs of the pupils. It is in line with the requirements of the Newham Agreed syllabus. Schemes of work are in place and are appropriate. Lesson plans are clear and relevant and, although rather prescriptive, do provide sufficient flexibility to allow for teacher initiative. In Years 10 and 11, the GCSE option caters for a small number of pupils. The course, based upon Christianity and Islam, is appropriate. Religious education is taught as part of PSHE programme. The content of the religious education element is limited. This raises the question of the subject's not meeting the requirements of the agreed syllabus. However, a plan to increase curricular time is currently under review.
193. The department is well managed with a clear sense of purpose and direction. The religious education coordinator is well supported by an enthusiastic and conscientious team. Pupils are provided with a rich diet of religious education. The planning and organisation of the department is good, and the development plan addresses priorities. It is a sound basis for future development. Regular meetings provide a good opportunity for the discussion of curricular issues. Resources are generally good and well used to support learning. The school's information and communication facilities are used well to provide a wide range of resources.

VOCATIONAL COURSES [IF INCLUDED IN THE INSPECTION]

194. General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQ) courses are currently run in Years 10 and 11 at intermediate level (Part 1) in business and health and social care. Alternatively, pupils in Year 11 can also enter foundation level (Part 1) in these subjects. In September 2000 two further GNVQ courses were introduced in Year 10, a full course at intermediate level in information communications technology (ICT) and an intermediate (Part 1) course in leisure and tourism. GNVQ courses are offered as part of the options system and provide a well-recognised pathway to further education and employment.
195. In 2000, results in both business and health and social care were below averages with a considerable proportion of pupils failing to complete the course. However, pupils who obtained an intermediate grade, equivalent to 2 GCSE grades A*- C, did better on their GNVQ course than in most of their other GCSE subjects. All pupils who completed the health and social care course obtained the CIEHO Basic Food Hygiene Certificate and completed a St John's Ambulance First Aid course.
196. In work seen in the three intermediate part 1 subjects, standards were also below the national expectation. However, the majority of pupils can find out information for themselves using a variety of sources both inside and outside the school. They produce coursework portfolios with researched assignments making good use of ICT. For example, Year 10 business pupils used PowerPoint presentations to show customer service in a local retail business they have visited, and Year 11 health and social care pupils analysed accidents using ICT. While description and presentation of data are generally satisfactory, most find difficulty in writing at length. Lower attaining pupils and those with English as an additional language have poor spelling skills and sentence construction is weak. Only a limited amount of extended analysis and critical evaluation was seen, even from higher attaining pupils. However, most pupils have satisfactory oral skills. ICT pupils are attaining in line with the national expectation. Over three-quarters of pupils have already passed Unit one of their courses. Pupils can word process and edit a document, combine text with images and use a digital camera. They can also find information from the Internet.
197. Pupils' pace of learning on all GNVQ courses is satisfactory. All pupils are given good individual support to enable them to improve. They are encouraged to resubmit their work to improve their grade or to obtain a grade for those units previously ungraded. Most pupils make satisfactory or even good progress over time but a minority fails to meet set deadlines often through poor attendance, and these pupils fail to submit completed portfolios. Pupils with English as an additional language and those with partial hearing make good progress, though supported pupils

whose second language is English depend on the teacher to organise their methods of study. All pupils learn to become less reliant upon their teachers and many show initiative in their learning. They gain confidence and independence. The majority develops satisfactory key skills of communication, number and ICT.

198. Pupils generally approach GNVQ lessons with enthusiasm and interest and are well motivated to succeed. They behave well and are courteous and relationships are good both between pupils and teacher and between the pupils themselves. Currently over half of pupils in Year 10 have chosen to study a GNVQ course.
199. The quality of GNVQ teaching was good or very good in almost all lessons seen during the inspection. Teachers' relationships with pupils are constructive and pupils are clear about their courses. Teachers are very knowledgeable, well organised and committed. Teachers' planning, teaching, assessment and feedback to pupils are thorough. Individual pupils feel well supported. Good use is made of appropriate stimulating resources, including local industry contacts. For example, a link has been established with Excel, the neighbouring exhibition centre, and the result of this was seen in a Year 11 business lesson when an Excel employee came to speak to pupils.
200. GNVQ courses are well managed and have an increasingly high profile within the school. They involve teachers from several subject areas and staff expertise has grown through appropriate training. Accommodation is generally satisfactory, though leisure and tourism and business pupils lack a base for their studies and there is no dedicated GNVQ area. There is access, though, to excellent ICT. Strategies for ensuring pupil completion rates are still not fully effective and need to be addressed if the school's target for raising GNVQ achievement is to be realised.