

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **NORWOOD GIRLS' SCHOOL**

London, SE19

LEA area: Lambeth

Unique reference number: 100624

Principal: Ms Barbara Williams

Reporting inspector: Dr Calvin Pike  
1565

Dates of inspection: 25<sup>th</sup> November and 2<sup>nd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> December 2002

Inspection number: 249082

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 years                         |
| Gender of pupils:            | Female                                |
| School address:              | Crown Dale<br>London                  |
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| Appropriate authority:       | Governing body                        |
| Name of chair of governors:  | Mr Michael Nieto                      |
| Date of previous inspection: | 4 <sup>th</sup> November 1996         |

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| Team members |             |                      | Subject responsibilities                   | Aspect responsibilities   |
|--------------|-------------|----------------------|--|---|
| 1565         | C Pike      | Registered inspector |  | What sort of school is it?<br>School's results and achievement<br>How well are pupils taught?<br>How well is school led and managed?                                |
| 9169         | J Keyworth  | Lay inspector        | Educational Inclusion                      | Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development<br>How well does the school care for its pupils'?'<br>How well does the school work in partnership with parents? |
| 23031        | I Knight    | Team inspector       | Mathematics                                |   |
| 31174        | D Westworth | Team inspector       | English                                    |   |
| 4720         | G Carter    | Team inspector       | Science                                    |   |
| 31096        | J Thornhill | Team inspector       | Information and communication technology   |   |
| 20537        | K Ball      | Team inspector       | Geography                                  |   |
| 10759        | L Bappa     | Team inspector       | History Religious education<br>Citizenship | How good are the curricular and other opportunities?  |
| 22577        | M Hart      | Team inspector       | Modern foreign language                    |   |
| 31705        | J Mason     | Team inspector       | Music                                      |   |
| 8622         | H Housden   | Team inspector       | Physical education                         |   |
| 15406        | J Adey      | Team inspector       | Art  |   |
| 24894        | C Petts     | Team inspector       | Design and technology                      |   |
| 8696         | A Maula     | Team inspector       | English as an additional language          |   |
| 18665        | S Murray    | Team inspector       | Special educational needs                  |   |

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Norwood School is a multi-cultural, girls' comprehensive on the southern edge of Lambeth. Its pupils travel from across the local education authority mainly from Brixton, Streatham and Vauxhall and a small proportion from the neighbouring boroughs of Croydon, Bromley, Southwark, Wandsworth and Lewisham. Whilst the school is situated in a relatively affluent area, a high percentage of its pupils come from socially and economically deprived areas. With 703 girls aged between 11 and 16 currently on roll, the school is smaller than the average secondary school. The number of pupils joining and leaving the school at times other than the start of the school year is high. Pupils' attainment when they join the school is well below average. There are 211 pupils with English as an additional language (EAL), which is high: they include a significant number who have very little English on admission to the school. The proportion of the pupils identified as having special educational needs is above average and includes pupils with learning difficulties and behaviour problems; the proportion with statements of special educational needs is above average. Just over half the pupils on the school roll are eligible for free school meals. This is well above the national average. There are 497 pupils from ethnic minority groups, mainly Black Caribbean, Black African and Asian Pakistani.

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

This is a good and effective school overall, with some very good features. Taking into account the attainment levels of pupils on entry progress is good, leading to standards that are well above average for similar schools by the end of Year 11. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 7-9 and good in Years 10-11 but there is some unevenness in the quality of teaching in some departments. The principal and governors lead the school very well. Through effective management of the majority of key staff and the commitment of teachers, good progress is being made in improving pupils' achievements and the quality of provision overall. The school provides good value for money.

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

- Pupils' attitudes to school and their personal development are very good
- Pupils' achievements in art, music, drama and dance are very good, reflecting the quality of teaching in these areas
- The leadership of the principal, governors and most key staff is very good
- The school cares for its pupils well, enhancing the positive environment for learning
- The provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development is very good

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

- Teaching of the basic skills across the curriculum, especially numeracy and information communication technology
- The consistency of teaching, especially in Years 7 to 9
- Use of assessment information to refine teachers' planning and further raise attainment
- Provision for and standards in design and technology and information and communication technology (ICT)

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

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

The school has made good progress in relation to most of the issues of the last report. Following a dip in examination results in 1997, there has been a steady rise in standards until 2002 when they improved significantly. Standards of numeracy and particularly of literacy have been raised, influenced more recently by the impact of the national strategies and the Norwood Achievement Partnership; standards in ICT and DT remain too low. The quality of teaching has improved substantially. Whilst there is unevenness between and within some subjects, partly owing to current staffing issues, the proportion of good and very good teaching is now much higher. The work for pupils with special educational needs

(SEN) has also improved, although the use of support staff is underdeveloped. The roles of senior and middle managers have been clarified and their knowledge of the curriculum requirements and their effectiveness in monitoring provision has been strengthened considerably. As a result of great efforts on the school's part, pupils' attendance has improved and is now in line with national averages for all schools

## STANDARDS

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

| Performance in:   | compared with |      |      |                 |
|-------------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|
|                   | all schools   |      |      | similar schools |
|                   | 2000          | 2001 | 2002 | 2002            |
| GCSE examinations | E             | E    | D    | A               |

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

In Year 11 in 2002, the percentage of pupils achieving 5 or more A\*-C grades was well below the national average but above similar school averages. The proportion gaining 5 or more A\*-G grades was in line with averages nationally and in the highest five per cent compared to similar schools. Indian girls outperformed African and Caribbean girls; English, Scottish, Irish and Welsh pupils attained least well. At the end of Year 9 standards were well below national averages and in line with similar schools overall but there were differences between subjects. In science and English standards well below averages for all schools and in mathematics they were in the lowest five per cent nationally. Compared with similar schools, standards were well below average in mathematics, in line with averages in science and above averages in English. Progress made by pupils in Years 7 to 9 was below that in similar schools in science, well below in mathematics but above in English, partly because of the unevenness in teaching quality in the age range concerned. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make satisfactory progress and attain appropriate standards considering their prior attainment and stages of joining the school.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect                                 | Comment   |
|--|---|
| Attitudes to the school                | Very good. Pupils show pride in their school and have positive attitudes to learning, particularly in the expressive and performing arts  |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms    | Good. The number of exclusions is relatively low. Although the behaviour of a minority of pupils is challenging, most are amenable and show respect for each other and adults. Staff and pupils work co-operatively together in dealing with the few incidents of bullying. |
| Personal development and relationships | Very good. Pupils are supported very well and encouraged effectively to enhance their self-esteem and develop personally. They accept opportunities to take responsibility readily.   |
| Attendance                             | Attendance is in line with national average. Punctuality to school is weak for a small minority of pupils.  |



## TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of pupils: | Years 7 – 9  | Years 10 – 11 |
|---------------------|--------------|---------------|
| Quality of teaching | satisfactory | good          |

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

Teaching is satisfactory overall but there is good teaching in Years 10 and 11. Across the school, there is unevenness in the quality of teaching between and sometimes within departments. Teaching is much better than at the last inspection and has improved learning because planning has improved, some middle and all senior management staff pay more attention to monitoring the quality of provision and pupils' attitude to learning is more positive. Teaching is generally good in science, history, geography, French, religious education, and music across the school and in English in Years 7-9. It is mainly satisfactory in mathematics across the school and, in Years 10 and 11, in English, ICT and design and technology. It is unsatisfactory in ICT and design and technology in Years 7-9. Strengths include good classroom management and teachers' understanding and knowledge of their subject. Relationships throughout are very good. Pupils are often keen to learn, most often respond well and help each other when appropriate. The major weaknesses making teaching less than satisfactory, or inhibiting potentially good teaching, are that teachers do not use assessment information fully enough to meet the needs of all pupils or extend opportunities for independent learning. In these cases, the pace of learning is slow and pupils' progress is unsatisfactory. The teaching of numeracy is satisfactory whereas the teaching of literacy is a clear strength in the school's current provision. Policies have been introduced effectively for both strategies but the teaching of numeracy across the curriculum is less well developed, partly because of staffing difficulties. The specialist teaching of ICT remains unsatisfactory as planning does not ensure progression or continuing of learning and the expectations of pupils are too low. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs or with English as an additional language (EAL) is satisfactory but the quality of support for pupils in withdrawal groups is better matched to individual needs than that offered during in mainstream lessons. Pupils make satisfactory progress whatever their prior attainment, although higher-attaining pupils are not always sufficiently well challenged in mixed ability groups.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect  | Comment   |
|---|---|
| The quality and range of the curriculum   | Good. In Years 7 to 9 pupils study the full National Curriculum as well as drama, personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) and religious education. Arrangements for ICT and design and technology in Years 10 and 11 do not provide sufficient challenge to ensure progress in learning. Provision for extra-curricular activities is very good, as are links with the community and partner institutions. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs   | Good. Specialist support is good but subject teachers do not always make good use of the available information, guidance and support staff well to enhance learning.  |
| Provision for pupils with English as an additional language                                 | Good. In small withdrawal groups, pupils benefit from the help of very good support staff and effectively used resources, although these are not always utilised fully enough whilst girls are learning in whole classes.   |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Very good. Provision for moral, social and cultural education is very good and good for spiritual development. Provision for personal, social and health development is good in the classroom and very good in the life of the school as a whole.   |
| How well the school cares for its pupils  | Very good. The excellent child protection procedures are known to and used by staff. Pastoral care provision and health and safety procedures are good.   |

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | Pupils' attendance, behaviour and personal development are promoted and monitored effectively. Assessment arrangements are good but not used by all to support pupils' progress well. |
|--|---|

The school works well with parents. It makes effective links with them, although parents have limited involvement in the work of the school.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect   | Comment  |
|--|--|
| Leadership and management by the principal and other key staff | Very good. The principal's clear vision and direction for the school are shared by governors and staff. The senior management team has an important impact in monitoring how well the school's appropriate priorities are achieved. The effectiveness of middle managers is satisfactory overall but ranges from being very good to unsatisfactory.  |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities           | Well. Governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses very well. They work closely and co-operatively with the principal in planning and helping to realise improvements.   |
| The school's evaluation of its performance                     | Good and improving, as monitoring systems, expertise and confidence in using available data are strengthened and used to raise standards further.  |
| The strategic use of resources                                 | Good. The school uses resources efficiently, especially those of the classroom and the building themselves; the use of computers to support learning in classrooms is less well developed. Specific grants are used well to gain maximum short- and longer-term benefits. The school adopts the principles of best value when buying services and consumables, as well as in measuring its cost-effectiveness. |

The number and range of expertise of teaching and support staff is adequate, as are the accommodation and resources. Plans exist for continued improvement in all areas. The principal and her senior staff work well as a team. The school's overall priorities form clear targets to which the majority of staff aspire for the school. Senior staff are becoming more skilled in monitoring and collating data about the performance of the school and its pupils but this information is not used fully enough by other key managers and teachers to raise standards.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most   | What parents would like to see improved   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The progress that pupils make</li> <li>• The school helps pupils mature and take responsibility</li> <li>• The school has high expectations of pupils</li> <li>• Most parents are confident to approach the school with their concerns</li> <li>• The supportive and positive ethos of the school</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount of homework, its quality and marking</li> <li>• The school should work more closely with parents</li> <li>• Incidents of bullying to be reduced</li> <li>• Extending the range of extra-curricular activities</li> <li>• Improved public transport to avoid lateness to school</li> </ul> |

Inspectors agreed with parents' positive views. With reference to areas parents would like to see improved, inspectors found that homework was set effectively but the quality of marking was uneven. They found that the school seeks to work more closely with parents but parental responses are low. Although some parents expressed anxieties about bullying, inspectors judged the school's policy and procedures to address known bullying to be good and well used. Incidents of bullying were not

significantly high and were dealt with effectively when they occurred. The range of extra curricular activities is very good, particularly considering the number of artists visiting the school and opportunities created for external visits and work experience. The inspectors recognised the problems caused by lateness to school by pupils who needed to travel a long distance to school.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The prior attainment of the majority of pupils entering the school in Year 7 is well below average. In addition, a number of girls enter and leave the school during the period of secondary education; the ability profile of those who join at other than Year 7 is most often below the national average. The entry profile has slightly changed in the last four years, largely as a result of the school's initiative in developing a Norwood Achievement Partnership (NAP) with six local primary schools. This has begun to attract pupils with a wider range of abilities but a large majority of pupils still need support with their language skills.
2. In examinations at the end of Year 11 in 2002 the percentage of pupils achieving 5 or more A\*-C grades was well below the national average but above similar school averages. The proportion gaining 5 or more A\*-G grades was in line with averages nationally and in the highest five per cent compared to similar schools. Indian girls outperformed African and Caribbean girls and English, Scottish, Irish and Welsh pupils attained least well. However, in work seen, progress made by ethnic groups in the school was not significantly different given their level of attainment on entry. This was because staff expectations are most often fair and relationships between pupils and staff are good. In national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2002, standards were well below national averages and in line with similar schools overall but there were differences between subjects. In science and English standards were well below averages for all schools and in mathematics they were in the lowest five per cent nationally. Compared with similar schools, standards were well below average in mathematics, in line with averages in science and above averages in English.
3. Most girls enter the school with low literacy skills but make steady progress in improving them, aided by the school's success in implementing the literacy strategy supported by NAP. Numeracy skills are also below expectations for pupils nationally and are being improved but less consistently than for literacy across the curriculum.
4. Evidence shows that, during the period of the inspection, overall standards by the end of Year 9 are in line with those of similar schools. Considering the curriculum areas separately, standards are:
  - below the average for schools nationally in all subjects
  - compared with similar schools, they are high in art and geography, in line with expectations in English, mathematics, science, history, French, music, physical education and religious education
  - below national and similar school averages in design and technology and in ICT.
5. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 achieve:
  - well in English, French, history, geography, drama, dance, music, art and religious education
  - satisfactorily in science and mathematics
  - unsatisfactorily in design and technology, and ICT.
6. Achievement in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory but, partly related to the uneven quality of teaching for the years involved, is less strong than for schools in similar circumstances.

7. Standards in GCSE subjects are:
  - below averages for schools nationally but above similar schools in music and art
  - in line with national average in religious education
  - in line with averages for schools in similar circumstances in English, science, history, geography
  - well below average in design and technology and in ICT.
  
8. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 achieved well above those in similar schools overall. In relation to the separate subjects, pupils achieved:
  - very well in art and drama and well in English, science, French, history, music, and physical education
  - satisfactorily in mathematics and geography
  - unsatisfactorily in design and technology
  - poorly in ICT.
  
9. The school has developed a clear policy for gifted and more able pupils, the implementation of which is co-ordinated by key staff in the school. Pupils are formally identified by departments and through separate testing. Information concerning these pupils is provided for all staff. In many but not all cases appropriate challenges are offered for them in classes and in some extra-curricular activities of the school. In addition, older pupils are supported to achieve well through an academic tutoring system that gives them opportunity to identify personal academic targets and ways of realising them. Consequently, gifted and more able pupils make good progress and attain well.
  
10. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall. Although they usually make satisfactory progress in lessons, they make better progress when the expertise of special educational needs support staff is incorporated effectively into the overall plan of provision for the lesson. When pupils are withdrawn for individual or small-group work, they make good progress in developing their literacy skills and in working towards the targets of their individual educational plan (IEP) targets. IEPs, written by the special educational needs support staff, are known to all staff and used well to provide pupils with appropriate challenges by the majority of teachers.
  
11. Most pupils with special educational needs make good progress in Key Stage 3 in developing basic skills; by the end of Year 9 the reading ages of a fifth of pupils with special needs had been improved significantly. Those in Key Stage 4 also make good progress. In 2002 98% of pupils attain 1+ A\*-G at GCSE – a pattern which has remained steady for several years. Four out of five pupils with statements gained 5 GCSEs at A\*-G and another gained 1 GCSE. Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) make good progress. Considering that they are not working in their first language, they achieve well. This is reflected in National Curriculum tests for 14-year olds and at GCSE.

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

12. Pupils' attitudes to their school and their learning have improved considerably since the last inspection and are now very good. Pupils show an interest in the life and activities the school provides. They are involved in lessons, ask questions, and say when they do not understand. Friendships are formed between pupils of different age groups and cultural backgrounds. They like their school; have a sense of pride in it and being a part of it. The school's calm and purposeful ethos encourages pupils to aspire, achieve and thrive. They care for their surroundings and there is no graffiti. The pupils are warm and friendly towards visitors and happy to help when asked. They respect their

teachers and non-teaching staff and have good attitudes towards each other. They are conscious they are expected to work hard and they take pride in the presentation of their work. However, a small minority of pupils have a less than positive attitude toward their learning.

13. The pupils value their school and all it provides. There are some strong friendships between all age groups. They listen to others' points of view and respect cultural traditions, values and beliefs of others whose backgrounds different from their own.
14. The pupils' behaviour is good overall. A substantial minority of pupils have emotional and behaviour difficulties and some are very difficult to manage. Teachers manage pupils well and some teaching and non-teaching staff are extremely skilled at managing challenging behaviour. A minority in Year 8 and Year 9 persistently challenge authority. Exclusions have decreased; this is due to the success of the school's social inclusion policy that provides pupils with extra support when they are at risk of being excluded. This term, one permanent and twelve fixed-term exclusions were recorded.
15. The pupils' behaviour around the school is very good. The school's good behaviour policy and recently revised anti-bullying policy are applied consistently and to good effect. Pupils have a clear understanding of what is expected of them and respond very well. There are incidents of bullying but pupils say that reported incidents are dealt with quickly and efficiently. When, at the beginning of the last day of the inspection a power cut disrupted the usual routines of the school, pupils were extremely patient waiting outside and were calm when entering the school to assemble in the main hall. Their co-operation in changing arrangements for morning lessons and their behaviour overall were excellent.
16. The pupils' personal development and relationships are very good. The school's personal, health and social education programme, including citizenship, makes a very good contribution to their knowledge of life and the world. Pupils co-operate well with each other in lessons and have respect for each other and the adults they encounter. For some pupils, understanding how their actions affect others is less well developed. In a personal and social education lesson in which a policeman gave a talk about self-defence, legal implications and illegal use of drugs, pupils listened attentively to the speaker and the views of others. The pupils are keen to take on responsibilities, encouraged by the school. Girls act as Year and School Council members, student guides, student mentors, prefects and student mediators; they undertake paired reading in a primary school, reception duties and the organisation of netball matches. Work experience, school journeys to the Isle of Wight and France along with the many visits to London and a range of performance opportunities provided by the school all make a very good impact on the pupils' personal development.
17. Pupils with learning difficulties have very positive attitudes to school. Their enthusiasm is evidenced by the many younger pupils who arrive early for the Learning Development Breakfast Club or pre-school reading sessions and by older pupils who help younger ones to develop reading and writing skills.
18. Pupils with behaviour difficulties respond well to individual interventions and try hard to meet the targets they have negotiated with teachers, including treating others with respect or not calling out in lessons.

19. Pupils with SEN of all ages are keen to learn in individual and small-group lessons. They contribute enthusiastically to activities and discussion and persevere with work they find difficult; they learn from earlier mistakes. In mainstream lessons, they work hard when tasks are set at an appropriate level and they understand what they have to do, but lose concentration and become restless when instructions and explanations are too long and complex for them to follow, or when they have to wait too long for help. They make good relationships with staff and with each other. This was particularly noticeable in a Year 9 Food Technology class where the girls helped each other with mixing and pouring, and discussed different ways of decorating cakes calmly and constructively.
20. Attendance has improved since the last inspection from 87.2 per cent in 1999 to 91.76 per cent in 2002. Attendance is now in line with the national average although the rate of attendance for current Year 9 pupils is 89.9 per cent. As the school admits pupils from neighbouring boroughs, many girls have a long journey to school. This has significant implications for punctuality.

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

21. Overall, teaching is satisfactory although clear strengths were more consistently evident in Years 10 and 11. Teaching was satisfactory or better in 90 per cent of the lessons seen, good or better in 57 per cent and very good in 19 per cent. In Key Stage 3, Years 7 – 9, the quality of teaching is uneven, mainly owing to temporary maternity leave absences of permanent teachers during the inspection. Consequently, whilst progress of pupils in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory overall, it is less even than for older pupils. In this Key Stage nearly a quarter of the teaching seen was very good or excellent and a third was good but just over a tenth was unsatisfactory. By contrast, in Years 10 and 11, the quality of teaching was almost all at least satisfactory, over a half of lessons seen were good and just over a tenth were very good. Moreover, the quality of teaching improves from Year 7 onwards as pupils move through the school and as provision was more closely related to the known needs of pupils.
22. The profile of teaching quality represents a significant improvement since the last inspection when more than a quarter of the teaching was considered to be less than satisfactory. Lesson observations and scrutiny of planning suggests that there is now a much-improved environment for learning in classrooms and in the school as a whole. A much higher proportion of pupils are now making satisfactory or better progress. Parents note the improved school environment and quality of teaching provided. Most unsatisfactory teaching and learning occurs when work is not pitched to pupils' levels of prior attainment, when teachers' expectations are too low or when the available assessment information is not sufficiently well used to plan appropriate challenges for the range of prior attainment levels represented by pupils in class groups. Unsatisfactory learning is very rarely the result of disruptive behaviour in classrooms.
23. Teaching is good in science, history, geography, French, music, art, drama, physical education and religious education and, in Years 7 to 9, in English. It is satisfactory in mathematics and, in Years 10 and 11, in English, information communication technology and in design and technology. In Years 7 to 9 the quality of teaching in information communication technology and in design and technology is unsatisfactory. Where personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) is taught in discrete lessons, the quality of teaching and learning is at least satisfactory and often better. There were also examples of excellent and very good lessons, such as in art and drama. These were characterised by planning which matched the range of pupils' abilities well, challenging and well-paced learning opportunities, high expectations and

an infectious enthusiasm from teachers, which enabled pupils to learn independently and self-critically so that, through reflection and sharing, they became even more aware of their strengths and areas for improvement.

24. There were also weaknesses in teaching. In a number of otherwise satisfactory lessons, planning showed teachers' intentions but work did not respond to the range of learning needs of different pupils and the methods used did not actively involve pupils. For example, some effective starting points by teachers were followed immediately by individual tasks. This did not give pupils opportunities to work in pairs or small groups in order to reinforce their understanding, to use new subject language or to practise new skills. In other cases, test data and information about pupils' previous attainment were not used fully enough to move pupils on in their learning from previous lessons. Some potentially good teaching remained satisfactory because the pace of learning was dictated by methods which relied on whole class teaching or because there was an over-reliance on answers from a few pupils without ensuring that all pupils knew or understood key points of learning. In information communication technology lessons, insufficient demands were made of pupils to enable them to make necessary progress. This is partly related to weak planning of the curriculum as well as the planning individual lessons in the subject. Consequently, the use of ICT as a teaching tool is still limited across the curriculum.
25. Pupils' attitudes to learning are generally good. Most pupils apply themselves well and listen carefully. Teachers are most often able to concentrate on developing pupils' learning without having to deal with behavioural challenges. This is as a result of the very good relationships between pupils and teachers and the safe and disciplined atmosphere created in lessons and the school as a whole. Pupils' concentration spans are good but the pace of learning varies depending on teachers' expectations. Where teaching is very good, pupils are enthusiastic to work hard, apply their learning and contribute to that of others.
26. Homework is used effectively by the majority of teachers to support pupils' learning. Overall, it is set satisfactorily. The school's marking policy is used consistently in all subjects, giving pupils and parents regular information about how well pupils are achieving and the effort being made in each subject. Variation in the quality of marking concerns the extent to which commentary, as part of marking, enables individual pupils to know how to improve their work in the future.
27. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in specialist teaching situations such as, at Key Stage 3, in reading groups following 'catch-up' programmes and in the curriculum support option at Key Stage 4. Here teaching built on previous knowledge and stimulated and challenged pupils with a variety of crisp, well-paced activities. In the reading groups, girls learned to analyse and reflect on spelling patterns and to use the correct terminology – words such as digraph and trigraph - confidently. Support in mainstream lessons varies in effectiveness depending on the quality of planning, teachers' skills and their perceptions of their individual roles. Pupils with behaviour difficulties in a Year 8 mathematics lesson and a Year 9 technology lesson remained on task and co-operated well in response to appropriate 'light-touch' support from a teacher or teaching assistant. In contrast, the format of other lessons did not enable support staff to play an active role for much of the time, so that neither teacher nor pupils gained the full benefit of a valuable resource.



28. The quality of teaching for pupils for whom English is an additional language is good in withdrawal groups and in lessons where support teachers are present. It is more variable in mainstream lessons where additional support is not available. Differences result in part because of the closer attention pupils are given in smaller groups. However, in mainstream classes planning does not always make sufficient provision for the range of needs of pupils. Planning did not take account of the range of pupils' prior attainments and EAL learning needs. Consequently the progress made by pupils in mainstream lessons is not consistent.

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

29. The range and quality of curriculum opportunities for pupils are satisfactory, with additional, good features in the curriculum provided in Years 10 and 11. There are some weaknesses across the year groups. Whilst arrangements for Information Communication Technology (ICT) meet the statutory requirements, the quality of ICT provision and that of design and technology does not ensure clear continuity and the progression of sufficiently challenging learning.
30. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 study the National Curriculum as well as drama, religious education, and - as titled by the school - personal, social, health, and citizenship education. Organisational arrangements, including bringing higher-attaining pupils together for some subjects, enable pupils to be provided for effectively, irrespective of their attainment levels or ethnicity. All departments contribute to the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, although implementation of the strategy to enhance numeracy through all subjects is less well embedded in practice. Provision for the development of ICT skills is weak: these skills are being consistently reinforced in some but not all subjects.
31. In Years 10 and 11, pupils study English language and literature, mathematics, science, a design and technology option, French, physical education, PSHCE including careers education, and a half GCSE equivalent in religious education. In addition, more able pupils also pursue a half GCSE in citizenship. At present provision for vocational education is limited and the school currently has no links with other institutions that might offer work-related courses. Alternative certification in ICT is available for pupils not following a GCSE course. However, there is some duplication and lack of challenge for more able pupils following both GCSE and a certificated ICT course concurrently.
32. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language is appropriate and effective overall. The needs of the pupils are assessed and defined well. When in withdrawal groups the curriculum provided is good whereas it is less consistently challenging or matched to individual needs when such pupils are working in mainstream classes without the benefit of a learning assistant.
33. Provision for extra-curricular activities is very good. There are a number of clubs, lunch-time and after-school activities such as those through art, music, drama and dance. Examples of these included working with visiting tutors, and a performance by the school's dance group and excellent gospel choir during the inspection period. In addition, the school offers a range of other support including course-work 'surgeries', Year 9 booster classes, and mathematics sessions for scientists in Year 11. The extra-curricular activity is enhanced by experience of the world of work gained through study with visiting artists and musicians and through the school's substantial work-

experience programme. A range of well-supported sports clubs and teams also operates at lunch-time and after school.

34. All pupils follow a PSHCE programme taught by form tutors and organised by year curriculum co-ordinators. The content of the programme includes health, sex and drugs education and, from Year 9 onwards, careers education and guidance. All pupils in Year 10 are involved in a well-organised two-week work experience placement designed to provide girls with experience of the world of work. Girls appreciate this provision and reflect positively on the value of it. In addition, pupils in all years gain as a result of the school academic counseling days. This ensures that individual pupils spend time regularly with their tutors to review current successes and refine targets for the future. In Years 10 and 11 the school enhances this good service through an external consultant who meets targeted girls on a regular basis in their examination year.
35. Citizenship forms a clear element of the curriculum in Year 7, 8 and 9. The programme, linked to the school's audit of a focus on citizenship across the curriculum, is effective in raising significant issues including those of race and equality and is taught effectively. As a whole, the PSHCE programme provides a continuity of learning and development of key skills necessary to support pupils in making appropriate choices about their current and future lives.
36. There are good links with the local community and other schools. A key development in recent years has been the Norwood Achievement Partnership. This has brought together six local primary schools and Norwood Girls' School to plan and develop effective working and curriculum links which have had a positive impact on induction by reducing the concerns of primary pupils on entering the secondary phase of their education. It has supported progression of learning between the secondary and primary schools and improved the quality of information about pupils on entry to the school. Not least, it has also underpinned the implementation of national strategies for the development of literacy and numeracy. Links are developing within the cluster of secondary schools in the area, for example in relation to the development of expressive arts and in relation to provision beyond Year 11.
37. The school has addressed many of the curricular issues of the last inspection. A one-week timetable has replaced the previously scheduled two-week one in order to improve curriculum organisation and support pupil progress in learning. This enables pupils of all abilities to be learn at an appropriate pace with two exceptions: ICT provision remain weak for all and some pupils for whom English is an additional language are currently not sufficiently well challenged as a result of the set in which they are place to study their first language.
38. The school sets as one of its highest priorities the inclusion of all pupils, irrespective of ethnic origin, in all that it provides. It monitors attendance, performance and participation of each group in the school and takes remedial action when any appear to be disadvantaged. Good use is made of funds to pay for an educational welfare officer who encourages all to attend and liaises between the home and school. For the relatively high number of pupils who join the school after the start of a term, and for pupils with special educational needs or for whom English is an additional language, additional help is provided where necessary. Senior staff monitor under-achievement and provides mentoring for those who need it.

## Spiritual, moral, social and cultural

39. The overall provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is very good. The school has successfully created an atmosphere in which the dignity and worth of each individual is safeguarded and is providing a purposeful and stimulating environment for learning in which everyone is respected and valued.
40. The provision for spiritual development is good. Assembly themes are well planned and are used consistently. The school does not, however, meet the requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils. Assembly themes cover a broad area of human experience and deal with such issues as responsibility and aspirations. There are adequate moments for reflection and, particularly in whole-school assemblies, a peaceful and reflective mood is set by an appropriate choice of music, dance or speech. During the week of the inspection, for example, the theme of 'aspirations' was effectively illustrated by the impressive performances of the gospel choir, a dance group and by pupils talking about their ambitions for the future. Further opportunities to deepen pupils' spiritual awareness and self-knowledge are provided in several areas of the curriculum. Displays around the school, such as the table in the library of artefacts and books to celebrate the Muslim festival of Ramadan, encourage pupils to value imagination and self-knowledge.
41. The provision for pupils' moral development is very good and the impact is apparent upon pupils' behaviour. The school has a positive ethos in which teachers provide good role models and pupils show respect for them and for each other. Many assemblies are based around moral issues and are well used to reinforce the school's values. Moral issues are discussed in many subjects such as humanities, science and religious education. Religious education, for example, contributes to this area through examining issues of prejudice and stereotyping.
42. The school makes very good provision for the social development of its pupils. There are many opportunities in lessons and in extra-curricular activities for pupils to cooperate and work with each other. There are opportunities for pupils to exercise additional responsibility through, for example, the election of the school council. Pupils were consulted extensively when the school recently drew up a revised anti-bullying policy. Pupils are able to apply for positions as library assistants or learning mentors. The school actively seeks to amend the behaviour of potentially disaffected girls by giving them positions of responsibility. As a result of this very good provision, pupils of all ages show good levels of maturity and responsibility. This was evident during the week of the inspection, for example, when there was a prolonged power cut resulting in considerable disruption to everyday activity: pupils were helpful and set a good example.
43. The provision for the cultural development of pupils is very well catered for through subjects such as English, history, art, music and religious education, which teach pupils to appreciate the richness and diversity of the cultures represented in Great Britain. Religious education, for example, examines the problems of stereotyping, while assemblies celebrate cultural diversity through performances of the pupils' gospel choir. Visits from rap poets, visiting authors and artists help pupils to understand the diversity and richness of a range of different cultures. Extra-curricular activities extend pupils' cultural experiences, for example through participation in the Thames Festival. A wide range of books and other resources extend these opportunities: the library has a growing range of multicultural books and information on events such as Black History Month.

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

44. The school's procedures for child protection are excellent and those for ensuring pupils' welfare overall are very good. Its monitoring of and support to improve pupils' attendance, behaviour and personal development are good. Parents are pleased with the quality of care and support provided and some individual parents have expressed appreciation particularly for support for pupils on entry to the school and others with special educational needs.
45. The school gives a very high priority to the pupils' welfare and happiness and this lies at the heart of the welfare, support and guidance they receive. The school's ethos has an expectation of all pupils to achieve well and aim high. The social inclusion policy and the network of teachers and specialists that are involved in it ensure all pupils regardless of their ethnic origins are cared for and achieve. The teaching and non-teaching staff are conscientious in their roles to support pupils whatever their difficulties. The procedures in place for ensuring child protection are excellent.
46. The ethos of the school promotes good behaviour and good relationships. Pastoral care provided by form tutors and year heads ensures teachers and members of staff know pupils well. Teachers visit primary schools and pupils say that the induction arrangements helped them to settle in well. Pupils are involved in setting and monitoring their targets and celebrating their achievements. Pupils are helped with their study skills for Key Stage 3 tests and GCSE. Appropriate placements for work experience are sought. Good quality information and help are provided for career choices along with information for further education, universities and the world of work.
47. The school provides very good support for pupils who have emotional or behaviour difficulties. Internal support from teachers and behaviour specialists, well supported by the school's own educational welfare officer (EWO) is very effective. Outside agencies are used where appropriate. The school Learning Support Unit, Centre 44, deals with internal exclusions and offers a good environment for pupils to continue their studies. The school aims to include pupils wherever possible; exclusion is used as a last resort. Good support is given for those returning to school.
48. Teachers and staff work hard to improve attendance and punctuality. Statistical information is used to identify trends. Registers are marked and monitored well. The school is at present considering improving its electronic registering system which has already assisted the improvement in attendance to support this process further. Award certificates are given to individual pupils, class and year groups that have achieved high attendance.
49. The school is very well maintained. Health and safety issues are dealt with swiftly. Provision for first aid is satisfactory. Appropriate risk assessments take place regularly and concerns are addressed without delay. Staff are aware of pupils' allergies and individual needs. Contingency plans for dealing with emergencies and measures to address power cuts caused by flooding during the inspection, for example, were good and organized well.

### Assessment

50. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are very good. The way data on pupils is collated has improved since the last inspection. The school is developing its systems for monitoring pupils' progress and target setting based on their earlier attainment. Data on individual pupils is now available to all staff, enabling the progress

made by pupils to be frequently and accurately reviewed. Curriculum co-ordinators for year groups and curriculum managers for faculties have begun to focus on how best to use the centrally collated data available to identify underachieving pupils. The use of National Curriculum levels in marking pupils' work across subjects follows the schools' marking policy consistently but there is insufficient emphasis on sharing National Curriculum levels with pupils in all subjects. The results of National Curriculum external tests and teachers' assessments do not match in some subjects, indicating a need to review teachers' understanding of the level descriptions.

51. As well as a published whole-school policy on assessment, the school has also highlighted the importance of using data as part of raising the achievement in other aspects of its work. All departments have been working towards setting targets for pupils using national performance data. A programme of one-to-one academic mentoring has been established through tutor and mentoring time, which provides pupils with the opportunity to review their own progress and identify areas for improvement. Additional academic tutoring incorporating assessment information has been successfully implemented for Year 11 pupils and, more recently, in Year 10. Most pupils record their targets in their school diaries.
52. The use of assessment information to guide curricular planning is satisfactory overall but some subjects are not using the information either consistently or fully enough. There are examples of good practice in planning, for example, in English, art, music and history but in other subjects information related to pupils' previous attainment is not collected and used fully or regularly enough to ensure that planned lessons support or challenge the learning needs of all pupils. In ICT and DT the use of assessment information to guide planning is unsatisfactory.
53. Collaboration between subject, pastoral and special educational needs staff is good. It facilitates the exchange of information and good monitoring of pupils' academic performance and personal development, along with a consistent approach to pupils with both learning and behavioural difficulties.

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

54. The school's links with parents are good and the majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire and who attended a meeting before the inspection were pleased with the school's provision. However, parental involvement in the work of the school has too limited an impact on its improvement and some parents are not co-operative in supporting the school's overall aims. The quality of information provided for parents is satisfactory. That which is related to the progress pupils make is good but some elements of the school prospectus and the annual report of the governing body do not meet fully the statutory requirements.
55. The school tries hard to work closely with parents, often engaging the education welfare officer and other key staff to support pupils who encounter difficulties. In the last year for example, parents as well as the school council have been consulted on the newly-revised anti-bullying policy. The school does not have an active friends association at present; such an association would provide an opportunity to strengthen partnerships with parents. Parent governors are involved in school life but there is one vacancy at present.
56. The school has succeeded in improving aspects of communication with parents. Pupils' attendance at academic counselling days has improved from 60 per cent in 1999 to 89 per cent in 2002. Parents' attendance at information sessions to inform

them how they can support pupils in their learning at Key Stage 3 and GCSE have also been successful.

57. The quality of information the school provides for parents is satisfactory. General information and newsletters are informative and friendly. Pupils' individual reports are clear and informative, pupils are involved in target setting and reports show what they need to do to improve. Parents are kept well informed over matters such as, achievement, attendance and behaviour. The school prospectus and governors' annual report to parents are well presented but omit several items of statutory information. In particular, parents are given the school's examination results but national figures are not included.
58. Although the school ensures satisfactory links with parents, parental involvement in the life of the school is weak overall. Some parents are unable to ensure good pupil attendance levels and pupils' journals are left unsigned. A small minority of parents will not give permission for outside specialists to help their child or themselves. On occasions, parents can be hostile and aggressive towards members of staff.
59. The learning development faculty tries to involve parents in work with pupils whenever possible. Letters are sent home and agreement sought for pupils to join specialist teaching groups, such as the reading groups or the homework club.
60. The behaviour-support teacher contacts the parents of pupils on her caseload every week to provide positive feedback wherever possible and to encourage the parents to support the work of the school. She works closely with parents of girls that the school wishes to refer to the educational psychologist or health service professionals.
61. Parents are invited to annual reviews and reviews of individual education plans and usually attend. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) also tries to involve parents actively in planning for transition at 16+. She starts this process early for pupils with SEN to allow more time for them to clarify what they wish to do and to prepare for it.

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

62. The school is very well led and managed by its principal and governors. The senior management team is effective and makes an important contribution to helping the school to realise its vision for the future. Most middle managers, curriculum managers, department leaders and curriculum co-ordinators for years are effective in contributing to the school's overall direction and in meeting its priorities.
63. The principal has given very good leadership since joining the school in the period since the last inspection. She has communicated effectively a clear vision to raise standards and enhance the school's positive learning ethos focusing on improving teaching and learning. This has been realised in practice by taking purposeful and effective action that has brought about many improvements. She enjoys the trust of the governing body and is ably assisted by the senior management team. The roles of the senior management team have been refined partly to accommodate statutory requirements for the introduction of performance management. Roles and responsibilities related to raising achievement are clear.
64. There are good lines of communication and systems and structures necessary for the school's continuing improvement. The core approach to improving standards relies on good monitoring of the quality of teaching and target setting based on the school's use

of assessment data. The analysis of assessment information has improved considerably. This includes a review of the achievement in relation to prior attainment and by ethnicity to ensure equal opportunities for learning. Whilst the use of assessment data is developing well in refining the school improvement plan as a whole, it is less well used by departments to refine practice and its use by teachers to improve individual learning objectives in lesson is inconsistent between and, in some cases, within departments.

65. Leadership and management are good in English, science, humanities (geography, history and religious education), the expressive arts (art, music, drama, physical education and dance), in French and in the learning support faculty. The mathematics faculty is led satisfactorily. Leadership is unsatisfactory in ICT and design and technology, where weaknesses in the planning of the curriculum and in teaching have led to underachievement by pupils.
66. The school has a clear set of appropriate and achievable aims and values. There is a very strong commitment to raising attainment of all groups of pupils. Staff are well supported by the principal and senior management team. The school is keen to confront all forms of discrimination and racism.
67. Strong, supportive and appropriately constructive critical relationships exist between the governing body and the senior management team. Governors are very aware of the main strengths and weaknesses of the school and take a key role in refining policy to direct and enhance the work of those in key leadership and management positions. They receive regular information from the principal and are actively involved in the school in ways that enable them to carry out their duties satisfactorily. The governors' annual report to parents and the school prospectus contain most of the necessary information required by law, although some key issues are currently omitted from them. Mechanisms for the governors' appraisal of the principal are in place and effective. Systems and structures for the implementation of performance management for teaching staff are clear and effective. Governors receive regular financial updates and this enables them to fulfil their overall responsibility for the school's financial arrangements.
68. The school improvement plan is an effective working document. It identifies areas of weakness and provides positive ways of rectifying them with clear cost implications throughout. Some committees of the governing body have also produced valuable, separate but related development plans that focus on particular aspects of development such as the school's buildings and sites. Subject teachers are issued with folders containing profiles of achievement for individual pupils. However, teachers' use of this assessment data in their medium- and short-term planning is inconsistent and underdeveloped at present.
69. Financial management in support of the school's priorities is very good. The allocation of funds is clearly targeted at the priorities stated in the school improvement plan. Procedures for triggering additional development funding are provided for all staff as part of the principal's regular 'Green Paper' documents that highlight current, future and anticipated issues for all staff. Funds carried forward are clearly designated towards raising standards through improving the range of resources where needed. Reports are made regularly to the governors' finance committee and this ensures accountability. Specific grants are used appropriately and well. There are no significant outstanding issues from the last audit report.

70. The effective administration of the school uses appropriate ICT systems including those providing details of the school financial management. The principal inherited a budget that had been brought into balance after a number of years of working hard to reduce previous deficits. Consequently, expenditure on the school's resources had been limited, including spending to support ICT. Whilst many of the resource issues for ICT have been addressed, the same is not true of the curriculum and teaching and best use is not made of the equipment by either the ICT department or other subject areas. The learning resource centre (LRC) by contrast is a valuable and well-used aspect of the school's provision, playing an effective role in the drive to raise standards. The school applies the principles of best value well. Overall, the school provides good value for money.

### **Staffing**

71. The match of teachers to the needs of the curriculum is satisfactory overall. The school has a clearly defined policy for recruitment. There is a clear recognition by the school of the need to appoint good quality staff. The school sees recruitment as a clear and continuing priority.
72. Teachers and other staff undertake a wide range of professional development activity which is closely linked to the school improvement plan and individual faculty plans.

### **Resources**

73. The quality of resources is satisfactory overall although it varies across departments. Resources are good in geography, music, special educational needs, art and physical education and satisfactory in all other departments. Since the time of the last inspection, the quality and quantity of textbooks in classrooms has improved along with the range of reference texts in the learning resources centre, which is very good. With the exception of the information communication technology department, the poor access to and use made of computers in departments is the greatest concern but steps are being taken, as in the science department, to improve this situation.
74. The learning resources centre provides good computer access to a range of cross-curricular CD-ROM programs and Internet web sites and an impressive range of books and periodicals which are made very accessible for all pupils. These are well used, particularly at lunch times, by pupils of all ages. The LRC manager and her assistant have been particularly successful in promoting its use.

### **Accommodation**

75. The school's accommodation has improved considerably since the last inspection. It is now satisfactory and used well. One adult described the site and atmosphere as 'positively smiling at you': the inspectors agreed with the comment. The school is kept clean and there are attractive displays in the corridors that are used for information and to celebrate the achievements and cultures of pupils.
76. Improvements have been made to the learning support offices and the learning resource centre, and three laboratories are now equipped to modern standards. The preparation room for science, however, is small and there are possible health and safety issues when working with hazardous chemicals. There are suites of rooms for the faculties of English, mathematics, science, humanities and learning development. The playground has been refurbished and is used well. In music there are good-sized



rooms with plenty of storage facilities, but the practice room is dislocated from the main room and this restricts opportunities for ensemble work.

## **OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES**

### **KEY STAGE 3 - LITERACY STRATEGY**

77. Standards of literacy across all subjects are below average. However, the Key Stage 3 Strategy for English is now in its second year and it is beginning to have an impact on teaching. The school, with the support of the Norwood Achievement Project (NAP) literacy consultant, has run a training day on literacy across the curriculum and the majority of departments are making contributions to the development of literacy skills amongst pupils. The manager of the school's learning resource centre makes a very good contribution to literacy initiatives across all subjects.
78. Speaking and listening skills across the curriculum tend to be further developed than those of reading and writing because pupils are given opportunities for discussion. In physical education, the use of oracy frames to enable pupils to structure their ideas is effective and, in French, teachers frequently model the type of talk required from pupils. In art, pupils are allowed to report back in pairs when answering questions in order to build their confidence, and in science there are opportunities for pupils to take part in discussion in introductory and plenary sessions. Pupils with special educational needs are encouraged to discuss their reading and, in a PSHCE lesson, were able to develop their oracy skills through the inclusive nature of the activity. Many subjects are encouraging pupils to learn new vocabulary through the display of key words, and oral responses in geography demonstrated that pupils were able to use them in context. In art, pupils are supported in their reading by the use of prompt cards and in PE, French and the special educational needs department, some reading tasks are differentiated. In science, pupils are encouraged to read aloud from textbooks and other resource material. At Key Stage 3, in geography, pupils were allowed to read in pairs and Key Stage 4 pupils were enabled to retrieve information through a text-restructuring task.
79. The support for writing across the curriculum is not as fully developed as that for oracy and reading but there are some examples of good practice. In music, for example, pupils are taught to use subject-specific vocabulary in their evaluations and a flow diagram was used to develop the vocabulary needed to comment on the moods in music. Some pupils use writing frames in history to support the development of ideas and have a glossary of key words in their exercise books. There are also examples of clear diagrams in science exercise books that are supported by key vocabulary. In English, in Year 7, one lesson out of three is devoted to literacy. Pupils working below national expectations receive support from the literacy progress units, the special educational needs department or the EAL department, according to their needs. The NAP literacy consultant has reviewed the progress of pupils studying the literacy progress units and has used the information to modify schemes of work. There is evidence that these units were generally successful last year from the improvement in the writing organisation of current Year 8 pupils. Pupils working at National Curriculum level 4 or above are taught information retrieval skills in the library.

### **KEY STAGE 3 NUMERACY STRATEGY**

80. The national strategy for numeracy has been implemented satisfactorily in mathematics where recent results have begun to show improvements, but has had little effect in most other subjects. Consequently, it has not yet been managed effectively to contribute to the raising of standards across the curriculum.

81. The school is supported in its implementation of the strategy by the Norwood Achievement Partnership. Consultants have advised the school, led training, taught model lessons and supported staff in planning and in classrooms. The mathematics department has rewritten its schemes of work in line with the strategy so that they now focus on what pupils are to learn rather than what content is to be taught. The lesson structure, consisting of a mental or oral starter followed by the main topic and finished off by a whole class session in which learning is reinforced and extended has been implemented in mathematics lessons. However, the match of the tasks given to individuals to their needs is not always close enough. Nevertheless, there is an increased rigour in mathematics teaching and this has led, at least in part, to the raised standards in 2002.
82. However, the implementation of the numeracy strategy in other subjects is much less consistent. The reinforcement of numeracy in science is not related to the strategy but is rather the result of appropriate science teaching. The numeracy strategy has had little impact on the development of numeracy in other subjects. For example, the department of design and technology - a subject where the reinforcement of numeracy is normally strong – has neither a policy nor a common approach to such basic skills as measuring with a ruler. Although a whole-school training day was organised to consider ways in which the numeracy strategy might be implemented in other subjects, there is little evidence that this has been taken to heart.

#### **ASSESSMENT OF PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

83. There are thorough procedures for identifying and assessing pupils with special educational needs linked to National Curriculum and whole school assessment procedures. They are used well and have a positive impact on pupils' learning overall.
84. Pupils with special educational needs have good individual education plans with statements and targets related appropriately to earlier documentation. Parents are encouraged to attend reviews and those who do not do so are contacted by telephone. Services from outside the school strengthen the support available. Provision described in statements is fully met. Statements are reviewed at the appropriate time and Records of Annual Review contain all the required information.
85. The learning development faculty uses entry data extensively and well to identify pupils who are likely to need additional support in Year 7, whether for learning or behaviour. This is supplemented by information from meetings with parents, primary school staff and related health and social services agencies where appropriate.
86. Reading groups in Years 7 - 9 are formed for pupils with reading ages of less than nine years. Pupils' progress is evaluated termly, although reading ages, for example, are only entered on to the school database annually. Pupils with the greatest difficulties in developing literacy are encouraged to come to the early-morning reading sessions, which take place daily, and also to the lunchtime homework club.
87. In Years 10 and 11 teachers of pupils with special educational needs monitor pupils' progress against Year 9 results and predict progress towards GCSE. The curriculum support option aims to increase the girls' attainments in the core curriculum and provide them with the opportunity to learn how to improve course work in a range of subjects, so that they can improve their grades across the board.

88. Special needs teaching staff record work done and pupils' progress at the end of each lesson. Each mainstream class teacher has a register of interventions. This includes whole class profiles (using school data) and a group education plan with relevant work targets and suggested teaching strategies. However this information is not used consistently by all teachers.
89. The school is developing good integrated systems for managing difficult behaviour. Pupils' behaviour is monitored in relation to set targets, identified by the pupil and behaviour support teacher thus enabling pupils to become more aware of their behaviour and its impact and enabling them to build on the successful achievement of one target to attempt a more challenging one.

## **ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE**

90. The quality of teaching for pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) is good in specialist withdrawal groups and in lessons where support teachers are present. Where this support is not available, the progress pupils make in their learning is variable. Teaching ranges from being good to unsatisfactory.
91. Targeted pupils learning English as an additional language make good progress in acquiring basic communication skills both in lessons and over time. This reflects an improvement since the last inspection where some concern was raised about the achievement of such pupils. The level of support is, however, insufficient in terms of the nature and extent of the school's needs. Only 30 out of 211 pupils at different stages of learning English currently receive specialist support. The school is aware of this and has plans to enhance the level of staffing when resources permit.
92. The two teachers funded under the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant are committed to providing these pupils access to curriculum and achievement by enhancing their proficiency in English. They have received relevant training, and their work with the pupils is effective. The support they give in one-to-one or small-group situations enhances pupils' understanding of the tasks set, as was observed in both key stages. They liaise with mainstream teachers, though, strictly speaking, their role does not include 'partnership teaching' in the majority of cases. Pupils learning English as an additional language benefit greatly from strategies such as questioning employed by mainstream teachers. Their careful explanation of learning points ensures pupils' understanding of activities, whilst enhancing their participation. Pupils also benefit from the use of appropriate resources, as was observed in a Key Stage 3 lesson focused on food related vocabulary and a Key Stage 4 lesson where the use of worksheets facilitated pupils' understanding of expectations of Victorian women.
93. All of this has a positive impact on pupils' learning and progress. They respond well to specialist support. This reflects their very positive attitudes to learning, which enables them to integrate fully in the life of the school and establish good relationships. They relate well to each other, their peers and teachers. This is an important factor in their learning, but pupils' progress, particularly of those at Stages 3 and 4 of English proficiency tends to slow when they are faced with tasks requiring literacy skills. Limited confidence in the use of grammar/ punctuation and subject-specific vocabulary holds some pupils back, though they appear to be coping with day to day demands of the classroom, at least orally. Many of these pupils read with little understanding and their recording skills are underdeveloped. The school library has a developing collection of dual textbooks, but there is no planned approach to facilitating pupils' acquisition of English through the use of their home language.

94. The school's integrated approach to meeting the needs of these pupils is reflected in the commitment of class teachers and specialist EAL staff. Specialist support is curriculum related and involves a combination of in- and out-of-class activities. Specialist teachers know their pupils well and are committed to their well being. They are involved in their assessment and maintain up-to-date records of their progress. It is on this basis that they are currently exploring the possibility of alternatives to GCSE examinations for some pupils. However, the school has not yet implemented the Qualifications and Curriculum Agency document 'A Language in Common.'
95. Support is well managed by the curriculum manager for learning development following recent reorganisation. The provision is improving. Ethnic monitoring of pupils' performance has led to the identification of minority ethnic pupils as both high and low achievers. For example, according to 2002 GCSE results, fluent bilingual pupils from the school were highest achievers in the local education authority by a substantial margin. However, specialist support is not available as frequently as necessary for some pupils who are at early stages of learning English, and some who are at Stages 3 and 4 of learning English do not receive it at all. The latter group of pupils would benefit from a planned monitoring of their progress and attainment. A large proportion of pupils learning English as an additional language are also on the special educational needs register. In some cases the purpose of associated funding for pupils needing additional support in English and the overall achievement of minority ethnic groups is not sufficiently clear.
96. The school's action plan has already identified the need for enabling mainstream teachers to meet the needs of their minority ethnic pupils. At present, planning of the majority of mainstream lessons and support provided within them are not sufficiently well matched to the needs of pupils with English as an additional language, although information related to their prior attainment and needs is made available for all teachers.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

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

- (1) teaching of the basic skills across the curriculum, especially those of numeracy and ICT by:
- implementing more fully the strategies for improving pupils' numeracy skills outlined in the school's improvement plan;
  - reviewing the provision for ICT in all subjects across the curriculum.

(Paragraphs: 3, 18, 24, 29, 30, 35, 37, 47, 50, 52, 59, 65, 71, 80, 82, 88, 89, 181, 183.)

- (2) consistency of teaching quality, especially in Years 7 to 9 by:
- teachers highlighting more clearly the link between teaching and learning in their lesson planning;
  - teachers using a range of teaching and learning activities in their lessons to enable all pupils to improve their independent learning skills;
  - teachers raising their expectations and planning work at a suitable level.

(Paragraphs: 21, 23, 110, 140, 163, 183.)

- (3) the use of assessment to refine teachers' planning and further raise attainment by:
- reviewing more closely the assessment information made available to all staff;
  - including information about prior attainment and pupils' other individual needs in planning lessons to match learning intentions to the range of abilities present in all lessons;
  - using assessment information to support the progression of learning from one lesson to the next.

(Paragraphs: 22, 50, 52, 64, 68, 109, 115, 140, 165, 184.)

- (4) provision for design and technology and information communication technology by:
- planning and delivering a broad and balanced curriculum for design and technology in Years 7 to 9 to ensure more in-depth range of learning opportunities which challenge girls of all abilities;
  - improving the schemes of work for ICT to ensure appropriate levels of depth and necessary challenge in pupils' learning;
  - reviewing ICT course provision to raise expectations and provide more demanding learning for pupils in Years 10 and 11;
  - initiating a scheme to monitor and raise the quality of teaching and learning in both curriculum areas.

(Paragraphs: 18, 24, 29, 30, 35, 37, 52, 47, 50, 59, 65, 71, 82, 88, 122, 139, 165, 166, 177.)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Number of lessons observed   | 127 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 46  |

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

|            | Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very poor |
|------------|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| Number     | 4         | 20        | 48   | 42           | 12             | 1    | 0         |
| Percentage | 3.1       | 15.7      | 37.7 | 33           | 9.4            | 0.78 | 0         |

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

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

|   | Y7 – Y11 |
|---|----------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll                                 | 703      |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | 359      |

#### Special educational needs

|   | Y7 – Y11 |
|---|----------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs       | 21       |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 178      |

#### English as an additional language

|   | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 211          |

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

|  | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 64           |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving           | 58           |

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

|                           | %   |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data               | 9.6 |
| National comparative data | 8.1 |

#### Unauthorised absence

|                           | %   |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data               | 0.8 |
| National comparative data | 1.1 |

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

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

|  |      |      |       |       |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|  | 2002 | -    | 142   | 142   |

| <b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b> |          | <b>English</b> | <b>Mathematics</b> | <b>Science</b> |
|--|----------|----------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above    | Boys     | -              | -                  | -              |
|  | Girls    | 78             | 63                 | 67             |
|  | Total    | 78             | 63                 | 67             |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above  | School   | 55 (54)        | 44 (28)            | 47 (32)        |
|  | National | 66 (64)        | 67 (66)            | 66 (66)        |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above  | School   | 18 (11)        | 15 (11)            | 10 (9)         |
|  | National | 32 (31)        | 45 (43)            | 33 (34)        |

| <b>Teachers' Assessments</b>                |          | <b>English</b> | <b>Mathematics</b> | <b>Science</b> |
|---|----------|----------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above   | Boys     | -              | -                  | -              |
|   | Girls    | 58             | 66                 | 68             |
|   | Total    | 58             | 66                 | 68             |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above | School   | 41 (35)        | 47 (35)            | 49 (41)        |
|   | National | 67 (65)        | 70 (68)            | 67 (64)        |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above | School   | 11 (4)         | 18 (13)            | 20 (7)         |
|   | National | 32 (31)        | 44 (42)            | 34 (33)        |

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

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

|  |      |      |       |       |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|  | 2002 | -    | 127   | 127   |

| GCSE results  |          | 5 or more grades<br>A* to C | 5 or more grades<br>A*-G | 1 or more grades<br>A*-G |
|---|----------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified    | Boys     | -                           | -                        | -                        |
|   | Girls    | 42                          | 118                      | 126                      |
|   | Total    | 42                          | 118                      | 126                      |
| Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified | School   | 33 (19)                     | 93 (92)                  | 99 (100)                 |
|   | National | 50 (48)                     | 91 (91)                  | 96 (96)                  |

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

| GCSE results                  |          | GCSE point score |
|-------------------------------|----------|------------------|
| Average point score per pupil | School   | 33.8             |
|                               | National | 39.8             |

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

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



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

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

| <b>Categories used in the Annual School Census</b>  | <b>No of pupils on roll</b> | <b>Number of fixed period exclusions</b> | <b>Number of permanent exclusions</b> |
|---|-----------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| White – British                                     | 145                         | 1  | 0                                     |
| White – Irish                                       | 10                          | 1  | 0                                     |
| White – any other White background                  | 50                          | 0  | 0                                     |
| Mixed – White and Black Caribbean                   | 43                          | 4  | 0                                     |
| Mixed – White and Black African                     | 7                           | 0  | 0                                     |
| Mixed – White and Asian                             | 2                           | 0  | 0                                     |
| Mixed – any other mixed background                  | 11                          | 2  | 0                                     |
| Asian or Asian British - Indian                     | 7                           | 0  | 0                                     |
| Asian or Asian British - Pakistani                  | 22                          | 0  | 0                                     |
| Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi                | 13                          | 0  | 0                                     |
| Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background | 8                           | 0  | 0                                     |
| Black or Black British – Caribbean                  | 214                         | 17                                       | 0                                     |
| Black or Black British – African                    | 111                         | 4  | 1                                     |
| Black or Black British – any other Black background | 48                          | 1  | 0                                     |
| Chinese   | 0                           | 0  | 0                                     |
| Any other ethnic group                              | 9                           | 0  | 0                                     |
| No ethnic group recorded                            | 3                           | 0  | 0                                     |

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

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

### ***Financial information***

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

|  |      |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 37   |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher   | 16.8 |

|                |           |
|----------------|-----------|
| Financial year | 2001/2002 |
|----------------|-----------|

#### **Education support staff: Y7 – Y11**

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Total number of education support staff | 12  |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week   | 399 |

|  | £         |
|--|-----------|
| Total income                               | 3,191,470 |
| Total expenditure                          | 3,134,746 |
| Expenditure per pupil                      | 4,440     |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 171,320   |
| Balance carried forward to next year       | 228,040   |

#### **Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11**

|             |    |
|-------------|----|
| Key Stage 3 | 25 |
| Key Stage 4 | 25 |

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years   | 13 |
| Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years   | 12 |
| Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)  | 1  |
| Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)                           | 3  |
| Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE) | 2  |

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

|                                   |     |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 704 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 142 |

### Percentage of responses in each category

|  | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school.   | 50             | 39            | 8                | 2                 | 1          |
| My child is making good progress in school.  | 54             | 38            | 5                | 2                 | 1          |
| Behaviour in the school is good.   | 43             | 41            | 6                | 5                 | 4          |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.                              | 49             | 32            | 13               | 4                 | 2          |
| The teaching is good.  | 40             | 46            | 6                | 1                 | 6          |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.                          | 49             | 39            | 9                | 1                 | 1          |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 50             | 36            | 6                | 3                 | 5          |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.              | 69             | 26            | 4                | 1                 | 1          |
| The school works closely with parents.   | 40             | 40            | 11               | 4                 | 5          |
| The school is well led and managed.  | 40             | 44            | 5                | 1                 | 11         |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.                      | 48             | 38            | 9                | 2                 | 4          |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.            | 31             | 39            | 10               | 6                 | 14         |

### Other issues raised by parents

No other issues were raised in the questionnaire responses from parents.

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

### ENGLISH

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

#### Strengths

- Higher attainers speak confidently and are able to justify a point of view
- Pupils attitudes to learning are generally good
- The implementation of the Key Stage 3 strategy has had a positive impact on teaching
- The implementation of the literacy progress units is effective

#### Areas for development

- The relatively weak writing skills have an adverse effect on pupils achievements in national tests and in GCSE examinations
- Teacher's planning does not provide sufficient differentiated tasks to meet the needs of all pupils
- Homework is not used consistently to consolidate or extend learning

98. The language skills of most pupils on entry to the school in Year 7 are well below average with the majority of pupils having a reading age below their chronological age and two fifths having a reading age at or below 9 years. In 2002 standards reached by pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 were well below the national average but above the average for similar schools. Pupils achieve well as they move through the school. Value-added statistics show that pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 10 and 11 when compared to their attainment in Year 9 tests. In 2002, the proportions of pupils achieving GCSE A\*-C and A\*-G grades were below the national averages in both English Language and English literature. Standards achieved by pupils at the age of sixteen were below national average but in line with similar school averages. Results in the 2002 examinations show an improvement in both English language and English literature. Performance in the National Curriculum tests by pupils at the age of 14 was well below average in 2002 but has shown a clear improvement since the last inspection.
99. The speaking and listening skills of the majority of pupils are in line with expectations, with some higher-attaining pupils demonstrating skills that are above average. The majority of pupils can contribute to discussion and higher-attaining pupils can express their opinions, listen to each other's point of view and justify their ideas with examples. For example, higher-attaining pupils in a Year 10 lesson were able to discuss the literal and symbolic meanings of a poem, and respond to the views of others, in a way that clarified their understanding.
100. The majority of pupils have reading skills that are below average at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. Observation of guided readings groups, in a mixed ability class, revealed that some pupils have difficulty decoding text and comprehension is on a literal level. More able pupils are able to respond well to challenging texts, such as *A Christmas Carol* in Year 7, and *Little Boy Lost* in Year 10, and show inference and skills of deduction that are in line with, and in a few cases above, expectations. Low-attaining, and a significant proportion of average pupils, need support in their understanding. At Key Stage 4, coursework responses to the scheme of work on *The Time Machine* indicate that reading standards are higher and pupils make better progress than in lower years. All the pupils with reading ages below 9 years work in reading groups with

special educational needs support staff. They make satisfactory progress overall. Pupils with English as an additional language who work with support staff in lessons make good progress but, in the lessons observed, those who do not have the assistance of support teachers make unsatisfactory progress.

101. The standard of written work is well below average overall but ranges from good to very poor in Years 7 to 9. In Key Stage 3, pupils make good progress over time but the rate of progress is slower in Year 8 than in Years 7 and 9. Pupils are able to write for different purposes and audiences but technical accuracy is weak amongst middle- and lower-attaining pupils. The department has implemented strategies to raise standards of written work in Year 7 with the literacy progress unit on writing organisation. Their analysis of pupils' written work indicates that the unit has been broadly successful in improving their writing organisational skills, and the majority of pupils are able to organise their writing in paragraphs in Year 8. Generally, however, pupils do not produce written work that matches their oral skills. At Key Stage 4, final coursework pieces show a development in the style and content of written work but errors with technical accuracy result in the standard of the majority of pupils being below national expectations. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 11 are able to sustain a style that engages the interest of the reader and can vary pace and length of sentences for effect. The highest-attaining pupils are producing work that is above average.
102. Pupils' attitudes to English and behaviour in lessons are good. Pupils are responsive and co-operative and have good relationships with the teachers and their peers. Insightful questioning by a Year 10 group studying a poem by William Blake enabled them to develop their understanding of the text. Pupils are encouraged to think and reflect on issues and, in the same lesson, pupils actively sought the views of others to clarify their own thinking and continued to discuss ideas after the lesson had finished. Pupils in Year 9 who are at the borderline of National Curriculum levels 4 and 5 welcome the opportunity of extra voluntary revision classes that are run after school.
103. Overall, the quality of teaching is good in Key Stage 3 and satisfactory with some weaknesses in Key Stage 4. Lessons are well planned, with clear aims that are shared with the class, and resources are used effectively. For example, the use of A4 whiteboards with a Year 9 class enabled pupils to draft their work and experiment with language. The majority of teachers are adopting teaching styles that are recommended by the National Strategy for English at Key Stage 3. They attempt the four part lesson and use starter activities to cover the skills of word and sentence level work that are featured in the Framework for Teaching English.
104. Teachers use assessment to identify pupils of higher, middle and lower ability and group these pupils on their lesson plans. Within the teaching groups, however, pupils tend to do the same tasks unless supported by a teaching assistant and differentiation is achieved by the teacher helping individual pupils during the lesson or by the outcome of the work. There was no evidence, within lessons, of separate provision for gifted and talented pupils. There is evidence of teachers having high expectations of pupils in both Key Stages 3 and 4, but unsatisfactory teaching occurred when less able pupils were given insufficient support to meet the expectations. The pace of lessons is generally good, or at least satisfactory, and teachers provide a range of activities for pupils. Where the plenary session of the lesson was used effectively, it allowed pupils to consolidate their learning and link this with other lessons but, in the majority of lessons, too little time was left for the plenary and pupils did not have the opportunity to reflect on what they had been taught.

105. Work is marked regularly and half-termly assessment pieces are collected in a folder for each pupil in order for teachers to apply National Curriculum level and set targets for pupils. Pupils also have the opportunity to use this folder for self-assessment. Evidence from the teacher assessed level at the end of Key Stage 3 and the test levels indicate that there are some inaccuracies in the teacher assessment of pupils' work. The department has identified this as an issue and plans to hold meetings to moderate teacher assessed levels at Key Stage 3. At Key Stage 4 there is also some evidence of incorrect grades being applied to work but the majority of marking is accurate. Helpful comments assist pupils to know how to improve their work and individual targets are set which are reviewed on a regular basis. Homework is not used consistently to consolidate or extend learning.
106. Leadership and management are good. The head of English and her deputy produced clear documentation and policies on teaching and learning. They have conducted a thorough revision of the schemes of work since the last inspection and have matched them with the objectives from the Framework for Teaching English. Departmental meetings are held regularly and teachers are kept informed of developments in the National Strategy for English. This is evident in the planning and teaching styles of teachers. Good use is made of Key Stage 3 literacy consultant through her involvement in the Norwood Achievement Partnership. Assessment and monitoring of the achievement of these pupils are good. Monitoring of teaching in the department takes place regularly on a formal basis and informal peer observation is used, with an agreed focus, to share good practice. Booster classes to support pupils working at the borderline of National Curriculum levels 4 and 5 are managed effectively through liaison with the mathematics and science departments. The head of English, her deputy and the NAP literacy consultant conducted an audit of the work of the department and have identified assessment and differentiation as areas for development. They have also identified the need for teachers of Key Stage 3 pupils to have more training in the moderation of National Curriculum levels of attainment.
107. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. The quality of teaching has improved and the department has developed schemes of work in a way that maps progression clearly. ICT in English is still underdeveloped. There is a range of extra-curricular activities that include theatre companies visiting the school, poetry and performance clubs at lunch-time and after school, visiting authors, a reading review club, after school workshops on essay writing for Key Stage 4 pupils and a celebration of National Poetry Day.

## MATHEMATICS

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

### Strengths:

- Standards in mathematics are rising throughout the school
- Teaching is improving because of the implementation of the Key Stage 3 Numeracy Strategy
- Pupils enjoy lessons, are keen to take part and behave well

### Areas for development

- Information and communication technology is not used effectively enough as a learning aid
- Tasks are not matched closely enough to individual pupils' needs
- The monitoring of teaching and learning is not yet effective in improving teaching further

108. Pupils enter the school with attainment in mathematics that is significantly below that found nationally. In the National Curriculum tests in 2002 for pupils in Year 9, standards overall were well below national and similar school averages. However, this was an improvement over the picture in 2001 when standards were very low, and is part of a trend of steady improvement. GCSE standards in 2001 remained significantly below those for all schools nationally. Although they rose significantly in 2002, they remained below averages for similar schools and all schools nationally.
109. Inspection evidence, including lesson observations, analyses of pupils' work and a consideration of data indicating the progress made by pupils over time, shows that standards are now below expectations, but that this represents satisfactory achievement and is a significant improvement over the situation at the time of the last inspection, when standards throughout the school were well below expectations and standards of basic numeracy were weak. It is still the case that older pupils lack confidence numerically and, except for the highest attainers, have limited skills of mathematical reasoning. The majority prefers to find the 'right answer', rather than pursue the reasoning for it. Pupils with a special educational need, or who have English as an additional language, make the same progress as their peers because of well focused support in lessons or when they are withdrawn. Teaching assistants enable pupils to keep up with the rest of the class. In some situations, they manage challenging behaviour effectively, allowing the teacher to concentrate on the primary job, that is, to teach. Although the most able also make satisfactory progress, there is very little provision for them as yet. Classes are organised using assessment data, but within classes all pupils attempt the same tasks regardless of their ability or speed of working. Although it is planned for in the department's action plan, there is little enhancement to the curriculum for the most talented mathematicians.
110. Teaching overall is satisfactory, so that pupils' day-to-day learning is similarly satisfactory. Teaching is stronger in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 7, 8 and 9 because teachers displayed a more secure knowledge of the subject in teaching older pupils. This was evident in teachers' questioning and their response to questions. For example, when a pupil in Year 10 asked why the tangent ratio in trigonometry is so-named, the teacher was able to briefly digress and explain it. This confidence allowed lessons to flow and enhanced pupils' learning. The methods of the national strategy are being implemented satisfactorily with the effect that lessons are more structured and pupils are more active in their learning. This helps them to retain knowledge more effectively. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive, leading to good management of pupils and enhancing the pace of the lessons. As a result, pupils enjoy learning the subject. Resources are used effectively, including whiteboards and overhead projectors. A computer-linked whiteboard was also used outstandingly well with a Year 8 class to demonstrate enlargement. This was so effective that pupils were agog and made great strides in their understanding of how an enlarged picture relates to the original.
111. Unsatisfactory teaching was restricted to non-specialist teachers of mathematics. It was characterised by weak mathematical knowledge or inappropriate expectations of behaviour or the content with which pupils could cope. In one lesson for pupils in Year 7, for example, the word 'factor' was used wrongly to mean 'multiple' in the opening section of the lesson, and then used correctly thereafter. This increased confusion in pupils' minds over a difficult concept. The teachers repeatedly referred to prime numbers, but never defined the term for pupils and several pupils were unable to give the correct definition when asked. In a lesson for Year 9, the teacher's expectations were too high. It became clear that pupils' algebra was weak at the beginning of the lesson, but the teacher continued with the planned lesson, which was too hard for most

to grapple with. Pace in this lesson was also slowed by ineffective management of behaviour.

112. General weaknesses in teaching include the use of information technology to support learning and the inconsistent match of tasks set to pupils' needs. Although one teaching room contains computers for pupils' use, no such use was seen during the inspection, although opportunities abounded in some lessons. For example, the use of a spreadsheet could have reinforced pupils' understanding of the method of trial-and-improvement by removing the need to carry out repeated, similar calculations with the associated risk of making errors.
113. The work of the department is being positively influenced by the National Numeracy Strategy. The scheme of work has been rewritten and is now satisfactory. This is a significant improvement over the situation at the time of the last inspection when many of the weaknesses in teaching were attributable to the way the then scheme of work was used. Teachers are also starting to use the methods and structure recommended by the strategy in lessons. Introductions, including 'mental starters', trigger pupils' interest effectively and sections for pupils to practice the main skills being emphasised are usually organised well. However, the quality of plenary sessions at the end of lessons where learning is reviewed and shared is inconsistent. In the better lessons, pupils reviewed their learning against the objectives set and saw some possible extensions whilst in others the session was not used fully enough to reinforce learning and identify gaps in understanding to inform planning of subsequent lessons. Nevertheless, the strategy has been implemented satisfactorily in the department and the improvement in standards, especially in Years 7 – 9, is partly attributable to this. The national strategy for literacy, however, is not as well embedded in mathematics teaching. Poor spelling of technical words are not corrected in books - for example, 'isocles' for 'isosceles'. Some teachers give pupils guidelines to help them talk about their work, but they were not seen used to their best advantage during the inspection period.
114. The department promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development satisfactorily. Moral development is effectively promoted in most lessons by the consistent application of the behaviour policy, setting ground rules for behaviour. The increased role of discussion in lessons has been effective in promoting social development. However, provision is not yet part of the formal scheme of work, so that opportunities are missed for pupils to reflect and give a spiritual response to learning, or to appreciate the cultural richness of mathematics. There are a few isolated examples – for example, pupils in Year 7 were asked to research a famous mathematician as a piece of homework – but overall provision is patchy.
115. The department is satisfactorily led and managed overall but the use of information about its performance is underdeveloped. The implementation of the national strategy and the improvement of standards are positive features. The action plan has prioritised the department's needs and contains sensible targets for future action, including the development of the use of ICT as an aid to learning, provision for gifted and talented mathematicians, and the match of tasks set to pupils' needs in general. Regular assessments of pupils' attainment are made but the information gained from them is not used to challenge pupils fully enough. Similarly although the results of the National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 9 in 2002 were closely analysed, the results have not yet been used to consider how the curriculum might be improved. Indeed, very little monitoring of the department's work has taken place recently, impeding its ability to share good practice and eliminate poor practice.



116. The departmental teaching rooms are adequate in number and size but there are few displays which celebrate pupils' work or challenge them to think. Staffing is unsatisfactory overall, since only two of the five staff have a mathematics qualification beyond A level. This profile affects the quality of teaching and hinders departmental development. Resources are overall satisfactory and are most often effectively used.

## SCIENCE

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

### Strengths:

- Significant improvement in the standards attained by pupils at the ages of 14 and 16
- Good teaching and learning
- Pupils show good attitudes to learning
- Improved laboratory accommodation since the last inspection
- Good team work by staff helps to implement and reinforce school and departmental policies

### Areas for development:

- The use made of assessment information to refine future teaching objectives
- Improved use of teaching objectives and learning resources which better match the range of need for pupils in mixed ability classes
- Improved ground floor accommodation for technical assistance

117. Since the time of the last inspection there have been significant improvements in standards attained by 14 and 16 year olds, although the department recognises that there is potential for further improvement. In the 2002 National Curriculum tests for 14-year-olds, standards were well below the national average for all schools, but well above the national average compared to similar schools. Standards attained by 16 year olds in the 2002 GCSE (double award) examinations were well below the average for all schools but well above average when compared to similar schools. During the last four years, standards at age 14 and age 16 have consistently been well below the national averages and below the national trends for improvement. However, in 2002 there was a very significant improvement in standards, attributable to a combination of good teaching and clear management strategies for improvement.
118. The standards of pupils' work reflect this improved situation. By the age of 14 many pupils have a sound understanding of the effect of acid rain on carbonate rocks and can write an appropriate equation to describe this. They have a sound grasp of environmental issues, such as the effects of pesticides on habitats and nitrates on food supplies. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and those speaking English as an additional language, achieve well. For example, pupils in a Year 9 class gave thoughtful explanations to account for the sensation of extreme cold in their hands in an investigation to explain the difference between heat and temperature. In the same lesson some higher-attaining pupils described kinetic particle motion well to explain temperature differences.
119. By the age of 16, most pupils have made good progress. Higher-attaining pupils can make use of words like 'ions' to account for their observations of an electrolysis process in which metallic copper is deposited at one of the terminals. However, in a Year 11 lesson about sound waves, average and lower-attaining pupils struggled to give explanations using appropriate language. Most pupils achieve well in their knowledge and understanding of life processes. They draw and label accurately such

organs as the heart and can write convincingly about the impact of microbes on our health. They make good progress in handling equipment, as when they measure differences of voltage in series and parallel circuits, but some average and lower attaining pupils often lack the skill and confidence to interpret their results accurately.

120. Pupils' learning is good. They can listen well and contribute to class discussions. During investigations they co-operate well and generally use equipment both safely and effectively, although lower-attaining pupils in mixed ability settings often need more support from the teacher in order to complete their task. Some pupils with difficulties fail to ask a question and are content to complete written work with only partial understanding. Behaviour and attitudes are good, particularly when pupils support each other in practical tasks.
121. Overall, the quality of teaching is good, ranging from very good to unsatisfactory. Since the time of the last inspection the proportion of good and very good teaching has improved significantly and this accounts, in part, for the recent substantial improvement in achievement and attainment. The department has recently been enjoying a period of staffing stability after two years in which learning was adversely affected by poor continuity because of supply cover. Teaching is generally well planned, although in some mixed ability classes the use of the same learning objectives and resources for pupils of very different ability restricts their achievement and rate of progress. Teachers have good behaviour management strategies, which they use to good effect. For example one teacher regularly holds high a clock when pupils' noise becomes disruptive, to show how much time is being lost. Teachers in the best lessons use their knowledge well to explain concepts, as, for example, in a good Year 11 lesson, where the teacher used her knowledge well to explain the way electric charge is carried through electrolytic solutions. In the least successful lessons, learning objectives are not made clear and insufficient priority is given to testing pupils' understanding both during and at the end of lessons.
122. Teachers mark pupils' books well, and this often helps pupils to know how to improve, as well as how well they are doing. Most teachers assess pupils' understanding through well-judged questions during practical sessions and at the introduction of a topic. However, inefficient use of time in a minority of lessons means that the lesson endings are not used as effectively as they could be to probe pupils' understanding. Teachers have made a good start in implementing the recently-introduced Key Stage 3 national strategy for improving the quality of teaching and learning and this has contributed to the higher proportion of good lessons in Years 7 to 9. Insufficient use is being made of the department's recently acquired computers and school learning resources centre, although there are plans to improve this situation. One interactive whiteboard is being successfully used in one laboratory.
123. The department is well led by an experienced teacher who is ably supported by a colleague with responsibility for the introduction of the national strategy in Years 7 to 9. The work of the department is monitored regularly and outcomes shared. There is a good sense of support and teamwork amongst staff which is helping focus on development plan priorities and to maintain the improvement in standards. Modernisation has improved three of the five laboratories since the last inspection but one of the two technicians' rooms has inadequate preparation space and storage capacity. However the school is pursuing plans to improve this situation.

## ART AND DESIGN

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

### Strengths

- Teaching, which is often good and sometimes excellent, means that pupils do well in these lessons
- The high quality of leadership of the subject has ensured significant improvement since the last inspection
- The rich and diverse curriculum has a positive effect on learning

### Areas for improvement

- Develop provision and use of ICT
- Offer more support for, and monitoring of teaching to ensure greater consistency of expectation and achievement for all pupils

124. Overall standards are in line with the national average. In the work seen, standards are close to average at the age of 14 and average in Years 10 and 11. Standards at the end of Year 11 are in line with the average for girls' schools. GCSE results last year were impressive; all pupils studying art – about a third of the cohort - were entered for the examination and most attained well. Achievement is very good in these years. At this stage, pupils are expected to take more responsibility for their work and they learn more about the work of artists from around the world. They benefit from the increased time and are encouraged to experiment with a wider range of materials and scale. As a result of effective teaching, pupils are able to think in three dimensions and have produced individual and exciting work inspired by Matisse. Drawing and painting skills are well developed and good examples of work from direct observation were seen. Pupils are encouraged to attend life-drawing classes which are held after school and the gifted and talented pupils who take up this offer make particularly good progress. Teachers are beginning to make use of ICT but more needs to be done in this area. Most sketchbooks are developed to a high level and are well annotated, a good foundation for future studies in art, although there is some variation across the classes.
125. Standards reached by 14 year olds are nearly in line with the national average. This shows that pupils have made good progress, as when they start school in Year 7 attainment is generally well below average. Achievement is generally good but not always consistent in Years 7 to 9. In some groups, expectations are not high enough and the pace is too slow for achievement to be good. Good use is made of the work of artists, including arts and crafts from non-European cultures, as a starting point for pupils' own work. Year 9 pupils benefit from an artist-in-residence programme in which they explore portraiture and issues around identity. As well as developing the range of their skills, this well-planned programme has done much to raise pupils' confidence in their own ability. Similarly, in Years 7 to 9, pupils have the opportunity to work with the Thames Festival. This is a cross-curricular event, inspired by a range of cultures and offers pupils an exciting involvement with the outside world of art. Homework supports learning and although the use of sketchbooks could be further developed, there has been considerable improvement in this area since the previous inspection.
126. The overall quality of teaching is good and at times excellent. In the best lessons, teachers display an infectious enthusiasm and deploy a variety of methods and activities which not only engage pupils' interest but also help them to develop well. Aims are clear, a lively pace is maintained throughout and work is evaluated at the end of the lesson. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are well integrated and make sound progress.

127. Pupils have a positive attitude to their work; they are keen to talk about what they are doing and participate in the lesson. Working relationships are supportive and very productive. Listening skills are good and pupils take pride in each others work as well as in their own achievements. Pupils are able to use an art vocabulary and they learn more about numeracy by measuring and scaling up their work. In all years, behaviour is generally very good because they are interested in their work. Work is assessed regularly so that pupils know how well they are doing and the National Curriculum level at which they are working. Homework is also marked regularly, though not always with a comment that explains how the work could be improved.
128. Art and design is very well led and managed. The subject benefits from being part of the expressive arts faculty, as this means events, visits and resources can be shared and used to inspire learning. Planning is very good and pupils are offered a rich curriculum that reflects the diversity and range of cultures within the school. There are good outside links and pupils attend art summer schools, visit galleries and carry out work placements in art related establishments. Accommodation is good and the exciting arrangements of work on display contribute to the pupils' experience of art.
129. This is a good department with some outstanding features. Teaching is monitored regularly and findings shared to continue the good improvement since last inspection. Much of the teaching remains a strength and examination success has been maintained. However, although there have been improvements in setting homework and marking work, expectations and outcomes are still inconsistent in some lessons.

## CITIZENSHIP

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

### Strengths

- The introduction of citizenship has been planned well
- The citizenship curriculum includes a variety of stimulating activities and opportunities to help pupils become responsible citizens

### Areas for improvement

- Although most departments are beginning to contribute effectively to the school's citizenship programme, planning now needs to include opportunities for progression and assessment

130. Citizenship was introduced at the beginning of this school year. It is largely delivered as part of the school's personal, health and social education programme, though many other subjects also make an effective contribution. Pupils also learn about citizenship through a wide range of activities and opportunities outside lessons. A small group of pupils is currently studying for a short course GCSE in citizenship.
131. Overall, pupils reach average standards at the end of Years 9 and 11. They are mostly enthusiastic, take an interest in their work and all groups of pupils achieve well. They are keen to learn about society and are open and confident in discussion. They work well together and are prepared to consider the views of others. In a Year 8 lesson, for example, pupils sensibly discussed drugs and the social issues relating to them. Many pupils, however, find the discipline of discussion difficult and tend to talk over one another. Pupils are beginning to understand some of their rights and responsibilities in a democratic society. For example, pupils throughout the school elect members to the school council: the election follows the format of a national election with hustings and

secret ballot papers. In history lessons, the girls learn about the suffragettes and the campaign for women's suffrage.

132. Teaching is good overall. Teachers mostly have high expectations and clear objectives. In the best lessons, pupils are encouraged to develop informed opinions and challenge the opinions of others. Controversial issues are dealt with sensitively and within a clear moral framework. This was evident, for example, in a Year 10 religious studies lesson where pupils were examining how modern British Muslim women dealt with issues of prejudice and stereotyping.
133. Senior managers have led the introduction of citizenship well. The course is at a very early stage and there is a clear commitment to review its structure and quality. There has been an audit to identify areas of study that are already part of the work of other departments. The next stage will be to review and monitor this work so that each department is actively participating in its improvement. Although all departments have identified relevant areas of study, some have not indicated how they will be provided and how pupils' knowledge and understanding will progress between Years 7 to 11.
134. Many opportunities for learning about citizenship take place outside normal lessons. The school council provides good opportunities for pupils to become involved in elections and to learn about democracy. Other opportunities for pupils to become active citizens include the peer mediation scheme and the Year 8 learning assistantships where pupils help in local primary schools. Pupils can also apply to become library assistants, reading and writing mentors and will soon be able to become language mentors, helping pupils whose first language is not English.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

### Strengths

- Staff commitment to manage challenging behaviour
- Quality of staff support for pupils
- Interest of pupils in the subject, particularly coursework

### Areas for improvement

- Establishing a clear vision for improvement
- Effective management and development of staff
- Planning and delivery of a broad and balanced curriculum in Key Stage 3
- Improved lesson planning for all pupils with an emphasis on special educational needs
- Establishing a whole subject approach to graphical communication including the use of Computer Aided Design (CAD)

135. In 2001, overall GCSE standards were below national standards. 2002 GCSE results showed an improvement particularly in textiles but remain below national averages. At the end of Year 9, overall standards in work seen are below national expectations.
136. At the end of Year 11 coursework folders are well structured and presented in food technology. But, pupils' research skills are underdeveloped, as they are currently dependent on catalogue cut-outs rather than the more creative use of ICT. Many pupils lack the graphical skills to generate and analyse effectively a range of design ideas. Although pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an

additional language make progress, their needs are not sufficiently well supported to enable them to achieve well in relation to their prior attainment.

137. Annotation is often simplistic and lacks technical depth. In resistant materials and graphic products, the quality of working drawings is inconsistent. Pupils' grasp of technical knowledge and understanding is underdeveloped, partly because they are not constantly reinforced in lessons. On-going evaluation in resistant materials is weak but star profiling of final products in food technology is effective. The use of target setting is developing but they are insufficiently clear or concrete to raise standards of manufacture for all pupils. At the end of Year 9 pupils demonstrate a good overall grasp of the design process but their ideas lack sophistication and their learning is hampered by poorly developed graphical skills. The quality of finished work is weak as pupils have insufficient experience in using exemplar materials or benefiting from quality demonstrations.
138. Pupils' attitudes to work are most often satisfactory and sometimes good. In Years 7-9, Key Stage 3, pupils sometimes lack self-control and require firm and consistent management to ensure that lessons progress at a good pace. Pupils demonstrate interest and are keen to engage when questioned, giving confident responses when questions are well focussed. They work collaboratively when provided with a firm, well-organised structure for working.
139. The curriculum in Key Stage 3 fails to provide broad and balanced experiences in all areas of design and technology. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have not yet been used to enhance development of key skills in this department. Key words associated with the subject are not highlighted to reinforce learning; skills of estimating and measuring do not yet form part of a departmental policy for the development of understanding and use of number. The planned use of ICT and Computer Aided Design (CAD) are underdeveloped. Pupils are insufficiently well challenged to develop appropriate skills in using systems and control across the school.
140. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in Key Stage 4 and some good lessons were seen in food technology and resistant materials but teaching is unsatisfactory in Key Stage 3, Years 7-9. However, whilst there are strengths in teaching related to the planning of lessons to a common format and the satisfactory grasp of subject knowledge demonstrated by teachers, there are also weaknesses in teaching: focused practical tasks provide a structure in which pupils can think analytically, but the quality of their planning and the organisation of equipment is insufficiently rigorous to promote high standards. Large teaching groups in practical areas with a limited range of equipment also impede learning progress. There are limited opportunities for more able pupils to adopt more sophisticated approaches to research, analysis, generating ideas and evaluation. Although project folios are well formatted the range of formats is limited and reduces the variety of content for all pupils. Effective targets are set for improvement in food technology but this approach has not yet been adopted across all areas. The use of assessment data to inform lesson planning to improve the challenge and pace of lessons is irregular.
141. Leadership and management of the subject area are weak. There is a lack of a clear vision for improvement and standards since the last inspection have fallen; the curriculum is insufficiently broad and balanced and standards are not closely scrutinised on a regular basis in order to raise standards. The monitoring of teaching and learning is inadequate at present to be able to identify priorities for development. Levels of technical support time in workshops and food technology are low. Resource provision is barely adequate and equipment maintenance requires investment and

planning. Risk assessments are not systematically completed for all practical activity. Since the last inspection scattered accommodation has been partially refurbished and equipment available is adequate.

## DRAMA

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

### Strengths

- Pupils attitudes to learning are very good
- The quality of teaching is very good
- Pupils make good progress in lessons

### Areas for development

- Standards in Key Stage 4
- Further incorporation of the national strategies for literacy
- Inclusion of ICT in the planned curriculum

142. Standards in drama are below the national average for all schools but improving. Pupils achieved results in 2001 that were close to the national average with just over half of those entered achieving grades A\*-C at GCSE. In 2002, a fifth of pupils achieved higher grades.
143. In Years 7 to 9 pupils are achieving satisfactorily with examples of some pupils making good progress. In Year 10 and 11 pupils make good progress as a result of very good and sometimes sparkling teaching, the strengths of which include an infectious enthusiasm for the subject, very good class management skills, planning and practice which enables pupils to develop as independent and confident performers and learners. These qualities have a direct impact on learning and the progress pupils' make. Pupils will special educational needs and others for whom English is an additional language are included effectively in lessons with particular focus being given to them by the teacher were appropriate.
144. Pupils have clear routines and use the resources in the drama room effectively. Pupils are able to speak with confidence and can evaluate their own performance and that of others in the group using subject specific vocabulary. In a Year 8 lesson, for example, pupils were able to use the terms "spatial awareness", "spoken thoughts" and "body language" in their evaluations. Pupils co-operate well in group-work and, with careful direction from the teacher, develop their improvisation skills as well as their ability to work as a team to produce interesting work.
145. The teacher responsible for drama is relatively new and contributes well to the expressive arts faculty. The subject is managed well throughout the school. There is a handbook containing clear policies and schemes of work with learning objectives and a list of expectations of what pupils should learn. Long-term plans are in place for Key Stages 3 and 4 and, where relevant, objectives are linked with the Framework for Teaching English at Key Stage 3. The schemes of work cover a range of activities that give pupils opportunities to cover moral, social and cultural issues such as Indian myths and legends in Year 7 and black history in Year 11. In a Year 8 lesson on coping with change, for example, pupils discussed the theme of bullying and the teacher used the opportunity to refer to the school policy on bullying. Key words are displayed round the drama studio and reinforced during work on evaluation. More explicit implementation of the literacy strategy is now possible as well as consideration of the opportunities to use ICT as part of the learning process and work of the studio. The

effects of the quality of teaching and management have not been evident in examination results but the subject is developing well in order to be able to do so.

## GEOGRAPHY

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

### Strengths

- Pupils develop an understanding of basic geographical skills and apply them to make progress in lessons
- Teaching is generally good. Lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives
- Pupils show a keen interest in geography and concentrate well in lessons
- The subject is well led and managed

### Areas for improvement

- Clear and appropriate strategies must be developed to improve GCSE performance
- Assessment data needs to be used more effectively to inform teaching and learning
- Key skills need to be fully integrated into the new schemes of work

146. Standards of attainment in geography at the age of 14 are below the national average. In 2001, only 26 per cent of pupils attained Level 5 or above in the Teacher Assessments compared with 64 per cent nationally. However in 2002 this figure rose to 51.4 per cent, reflecting the recent progress made by the department.
147. Standards of attainment at the age of 16 are well below the national average. In 2001, a fifth of pupils attained an A\*-C pass in the GCSE examination. The proportion attaining an A\*-C pass in 2002 fell just over a tenth, although every pupil entered achieved an A\*-G grade. The performance of the pupils entered for geography compares unfavourably with their performance in other subjects with many of the more able pupils attaining only a D grade in geography. The department must develop clearly focused targets and strategies to raise the level of attainment in 2003.
148. In the lessons seen, the levels of attainment were broadly in line with national expectations. In Year 7, pupils can use appropriate mapwork skills to correctly interpret an Ordnance Survey map of the local area. The more able pupils in Year 8 can identify the various categories of primary economic activity and use relevant geographical vocabulary to explain how they are affected by physical and human processes. They also show an awareness of the environmental issues associated with economic activity. In Year 9 the pupils have a basic knowledge and understanding of a number of natural hazards and, in lessons, used a decision-making exercise to analyse human responses to a hurricane. The work in exercise books is neat and well presented. There is little unfinished work. Literacy is boosted by a range of writing activities and opportunities for speaking and listening. In some lessons there were missed opportunities for the development of other key skills and the department needs to develop a more standardised approach in this area, particularly in the use of ICT. Pupils with SEN and EAL make satisfactory progress in lessons and attain well in relation to their prior attainment.
149. In Year 10 the pupils have a secure knowledge and understanding of the basic issues surrounding population, resources and sustainability although only the more able can offer detailed explanations of their findings. Year 11 pupils study contrasting urban environments in the London Borough of Lambeth for the coursework component of



their GCSE examination. The use of ICT enables a range of graphical techniques to be used to represent the primary data collected in the field.

150. Teaching is good overall and the pupils learn well as a result. There were no examples of unsatisfactory teaching. Teachers show good subject knowledge and lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives. Good classroom management skills are used to sustain the interest and concentration of all pupils. In one Year 8 lesson, a number of lower-ability pupils made good progress as a result of the close liaison between the classroom teacher and a learning support assistant. Teaching resources have improved since the last inspection but there is a need to develop a wider range of differentiated resources and teaching strategies to stimulate and challenge pupils of all abilities.
151. All pupils make good progress in lessons. They come well prepared, focus quickly on the tasks set and clearly enjoy the subject. They work collaboratively when required and relationships within the classroom are good. They read confidently when asked and listen attentively to others.
152. Exercise books are marked regularly and work is graded for effort and attainment. Pupils in all year groups are assessed at the end of each teaching module when an attainment level, target grade and suggestions for further improvement are provided. The department needs to build on this and make greater use of the available statistical data to monitor pupils' performance and use the results to inform curriculum planning and develop more sharply focused targets.
153. Geography is grouped within the humanities faculty where there is clear leadership and a firm commitment to raising levels of achievement. The group of teachers work well together as a team and recognise the importance common objectives and the sharing of good practice. Displays of pupils' work, key vocabulary and current geographical issues present a positive working environment within classrooms. The department has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection and many of the issues raised there have been addressed. However, the schemes of work at Key Stage 3 need updating to include opportunities for the development of key skills and those at Key Stage 4 need to be completed in line with the specifications of the Edexcel examination board.

## HISTORY

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

### Strengths

- GCSE results are good
- Teaching is good with many very good features. In one lesson it was excellent
- Pupils are enthusiastic and have positive attitudes to work

### Areas for improvement

- Girls do not always listen carefully enough to each other during discussions

154. Teachers assessed standards at the end of Year 9 as below average in 2002 and well below average in 2001. Inspection evidence confirms that standards are still below average when compared with national figures but in line with attainment in similar schools. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of historical events, people and concepts are below average when compared to all schools but girls are making clear gains in their knowledge of topics studied and they make good progress from Year 7 to

9. This progress is due to focused teaching of key historical knowledge and skills and to the positive attitudes of the pupils towards their lessons. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language develop their understanding of topics at a steady rate and, with effective support, continue to improve their work. Higher-attaining pupils are beginning to write well. Skills learnt in these years provide a good foundation for the GCSE. The department is working hard to improve pupils' writing skills and there is evidence that their strategies are having a positive impact on standards.
155. The percentage of pupils achieving grades A\*-C in 2001 was in line with national averages and, although results in 2002 dipped, available inspection evidence suggests that standards are currently just average. The department works hard to improve pupils' skills from Year 7 onwards, and there is evidence that these strategies are having a positive impact on standards in Years 10 and 11, enabling girls of all abilities to make good progress. At all levels of attainment, pupils build up their knowledge and understanding of topics studied, for example, the dismantling of the apartheid system in South Africa.
156. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. They clearly enjoy their lessons and want to do their best. Pupils co-operate with their teachers and with each other. This means that the atmosphere in lessons is positive and successful learning can take place. Pupils participate actively in all lessons and are keen to ask and answer questions or read out loud. In some discussions, however, girls do not listen carefully enough to each other's contributions and continue to talk over the teacher or each other.
157. The quality of teaching is good overall, with some very good features. Occasionally it is excellent. There are many significant strengths in the teaching. Lessons start well so that pupils settle quickly to their work. Some teachers, for example, ask girls to write down three things they remember from the last lesson while the register is being taken. Teachers have high expectations of what their pupils can achieve which helps to raise their confidence and self-esteem. Teachers extend pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills effectively by constant reinforcement and good questions. They plan lessons carefully and deliver them enthusiastically. As a result, pupils are very interested and work at a good pace. This was evident, for example, in a Year 7 lesson on Chepstow Castle, where a series of excellent questions enabled pupils of all abilities to understand why medieval castles were so successful. Relationships are very positive, so that pupils feel valued. History classrooms are cheerful and pleasant places with good displays of pupils' work and other relevant materials.
158. History is part of a cohesive and effective humanities faculty which includes religious education, geography and sociology. The subject is well managed with a clear commitment to raising standards. Both the head of faculty and the head of history have a clear sense of purpose and direction and a good understanding of what the subject's priorities are. Teachers work well as a team. Good progress has been made since the last inspection.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

### Strengths

- The attitudes and behaviour of pupils

### Areas for development

- Initiate a scheme to monitor and raise the quality of teaching and learning
- Develop the ICT curriculum to ensure full schemes of work for every year
- Instigate a strategy to raise standards at all levels
- Establish a training programme to raise level of expertise of all teaching staff
- The appropriateness of the courses offered to Years 10 and 11

159. The level of prior attainment of pupils is well below the national average. 2002 National Curriculum teacher assessments for pupils obtaining levels 5 or above were well below the national average for girls. The quality of work examined indicates unsatisfactory progress and standards at the end of Year 9 remain well below average. This represents unsatisfactory achievement.
160. Year 7 pupils can create pages of information with basic graphics, simple formatting and editing. They do not have opportunity to combine graphics, text and sound in a single presentation and do not use ICT for modelling or measurement and control. Year 8 pupils are able to complete basic word processing tasks and format and edit their text. They do not use different forms of presentation nor show a critical awareness of the needs of audiences. Year 9 pupils show skills in creating a simple database structure with about six fields. They also enter a small number of records but do not yet set up queries or reports or not check the data for accuracy nor select appropriate information for presentation. Whilst pupils in Years 7-9 demonstrate basic skills, they have too little experience of more demanding skills, knowledge and developing associated knowledge to raise standards overall at present, irrespective of their prior attainment levels. Pupils with special educational needs and others for whom English is an additional language make steady progress but this is too limited as provision by class teachers to meet their particular needs is not made within planning or in the organization of the classroom.
161. The level of attainment at the end of Year 11 in 2001 was low in relation to national averages. The results in 2002 improved with relatively higher proportion of pupils obtaining A\* - C grades but these were both well below the results in 1998 and 2000. This represents poor achievement.
162. The Year 10 pupils on the GCSE course make satisfactory progress and demonstrate a range of ICT skills and understanding. They access the Internet to obtain data and pictures which they transfer from one package to another. They create good quality integrated presentations, combining text and graphics in different forms. The standards of pupils in Year 10 seen during the inspection are just below national expectations for the age of the pupils. The other pupils in years 10 and 11 undertake the CLAIT course which is designed for complete beginners. The tasks are prescribed at a very basic level and as a result the achievement of pupils is poor.
163. Teaching and learning in Years 7, 8 and 9 is overall unsatisfactory, with some satisfactory teaching and in Year 10 it is satisfactory and sometimes better. Where teaching is satisfactory, teachers plan well and provide worksheets which develop ICT

skills and understanding. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, teachers do not plan lessons well nor structure the learning outcomes. They do not give clear instructions so pupils are not sure what they have to do. Time management is unsatisfactory so pupils do not have enough time using the computer to complete the set tasks. The pace of lessons is slow and the tasks are not sufficiently challenging to extend the knowledge and ICT skills of pupils.

164. Pupils' attitudes are mixed, with the majority showing respect for teachers, each other and equipment. Behaviour is not always satisfactory and pupils take advantage of unsatisfactory teaching. In such lessons, pupils lack concentration and do not keep to task. The poor concentration of a number of pupils resulted in them not making any progress at all. Where teaching is satisfactory, pupils show enthusiasm for the work and co-operate with each other, providing help where appropriate. They freely discuss their work and are able to explain what they are doing and how they use the facilities of the software. They work independently and are willing to experiment and find out new techniques for themselves. Pupils socialise well together and willingly work with each other irrespective of prior attainment levels, friendship groups or race. Different worksheets are not prepared to challenge the different range of abilities within classes but teachers treat and support all pupils equally, helping them to attain results which show sound progress
165. Overall the management of ICT is unsatisfactory. The schemes of work for Years 8 and 9 are not complete. Some modules are repeated in Years 9 and 10. The curriculum does not cover all the elements of the new National Curriculum strategy for ICT, though it is expected that other subjects will take responsibility for such aspects as modelling and measurement and control. Expectations in schemes of work are low and the tasks listed are not challenging enough to raise attainment levels. There has been an audit of standards, but no strategic planned programme has been instigated to raise these standards. Assessment procedures are weak – the self and peer assessment scheme is not adequately supported by teachers' guidance and involvement. In Years 7, 8 and 9, teachers assess the progress of pupils with comments on work and grades, but they do not set individual targets nor provide information about criteria to be met to achieve specific levels. Teachers do not meet to standardise gradings and assessments are not used to inform future curriculum planning. In Years 10 and 11, each piece of work is assessed against the criteria set by the examination board, but there are not enough regular assessments. Although there are a number of non-specialists teaching ICT, there is no training programme or strategic plan to improve the subject knowledge of the departmental staff and teaching and learning are not monitored effectively by the department. The use of ICT across the curriculum is unsatisfactory, with little or no ICT being delivered in the core subjects. There is some use of ICT in art and geography, but in other subjects the use of ICT is unsatisfactory. Whilst a focus group for the use of ICT across the curriculum has been developed, no strategic plans have yet been written.
166. The resources for ICT have improved and the department has modern equipment and software which meets curriculum needs. However the management of ICT and the teaching and learning remain unsatisfactory. Although the quality and range of resources has improved since the last inspection, the use made of them and standards of pupils' work have not. At the end of Year 11 standards have regressed.

## MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

### Strengths

- The commitment of teaching staff and the high standard of teachers' skills in French, leading to good attitudes to learning
- Very good leadership and management of the department
- Rising standards across the whole ability range

### Areas for improvement

- There are not enough books for pupils to be able to take them home
- Greater access is needed to information and communication technology

167. Standards in French at age 14 are below those expected nationally and for similar schools, but for the last two years they have been rising steadily. Soon after starting French in Year 7 pupils are able to respond to familiar instructions and questions spoken at normal speed. By the end of Year 9 higher-attaining pupils can communicate well orally and in writing, for example, on jobs around the house. Lower-attaining pupils still communicate much of what they want to say but their spoken and written responses are less accurate. Oral work and listening comprehension are generally stronger than written work.
168. At the end of Year 11, results in GCSE examinations are below what is expected for national schools and for comparable schools. However, this picture does not do justice to the school's success in giving every pupil, (including those with special educational needs, English language learners and late entrants to the school), the opportunity to study French to GCSE level. Almost every pupil achieves a grade and very able linguists can attain passes at the highest grades. Standards have risen steadily over the past two years; results prior to the year 2000 are not directly comparable as only the most able pupils were then entered for the examination. By the end of Year 11 pupils can understand the main points from spoken or written passages of French. They can talk about their likes and dislikes and give reasons, for example, commenting on facilities for shopping or leisure activities. The most able linguists do this with accuracy, using past and future tenses, while lower attainers achieve substantial communication albeit with many errors. Listening and responding and oral work are still stronger than written work.
169. Teaching in French is good overall, with no unsatisfactory teaching and some very good lessons. Teachers' skills in French are very good; staff include native French speakers and very able linguists. Teachers are extremely positive in their approach and develop very good relationships with pupils, who therefore work with confidence and good motivation, seek help appropriately and respect their teachers. They make good progress. In the most successful lessons, teachers use very good methods and approaches, enabling pupils to experience many repetitions of the material they are learning presented in different ways so that they do not get bored; they encourage pupils to develop skills in listening for the "gist" of a passage or scanning a text for key information. In those occasional lessons which are satisfactory but have areas for improvement, the balance in teaching grammar is too heavily weighted towards explanation and pupils do not have enough opportunities to hear the patterns of the language; lesson planning is not always clear enough about how the work of pupils with special educational needs or who are learning English as an additional language will be matched to their abilities. As a result pupils with special educational needs and those

for whom English is an additional language do not consistently make satisfactory progress.

170. The quality of assessment is good and teachers adapt lessons and schemes of work in the light of the information gained from assessment. Teachers are using effectively techniques derived from the literacy strategy, including key words, writing and speaking frames, and they encourage personal research and dictionary skills. These techniques are helping to raise standards in French. The department also supports the numeracy strategy by including surveys, charts, percentages and currency conversion. There is evidence of some use of information and communication technology in French but this needs to be developed further.
171. The French curriculum is well supported by work outside the classroom that includes excellent displays, revision clubs, the school's French magazine, and regular and well-planned trips to France. More able pupils have been able, with grant funding, to attend the special "France En Directe" teaching sessions in the Westminster Halls. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' social and cultural development, particularly their understanding of their own culture and civilisation and that of French speaking communities.
172. Leadership and management of the department are very good. Both policies and practice are of a very high standard. The head of department actively promotes the professional development of teachers and supports newly appointed staff very well. She monitors teaching, planning and pupils' work very effectively and takes action to improve attainment, including personal mentoring of pupils who are close to achieving a particular grade. The department keeps both parents and pupils very well informed about their progress, the requirements of coursework and what they have to do to improve. Leadership promotes excellent teamwork within the department and a commitment to improving achievement for every pupil. Pupils understand the quality of support they are receiving and try very hard to do their best.
173. Improvement since the last inspection has been significant, and very good in the last two years. Resources are now much better, particularly reading-scheme books and library resources. However, the department still has insufficient books for pupils to have one each to keep and take home and this has a negative effect on attainment. Access to information and communication technology is difficult because of timetabling problems, and this is not allowing the department to make the most effective use of new technology.

## MUSIC

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

### Strengths

- Standards at GCSE are improving year by year, with classes which are almost double the normal size
- Pupils make good progress at all levels
- Teaching is very clear, setting high expectations of the pupils
- Where experts enhance teaching, pupils benefit from excellent opportunities to extend their learning
- A large number of pupils participate in the wide range extra-curricular musical activities
- There is an excellent whole-school commitment to developing the musical potential of the pupils

### Areas for improvement

- The lack of computers and music software limits progress in Years 10 and 11 in particular
- The lack of formal homework in Years 7 to 9 restricts learning
- The location of the music and practice rooms present difficulties for the delivery of lessons.

174. As the group size was small, it is not possible to comment reliably on the 2002 GCSE results in music. However, the results viewed over the period 1999-2002 show improvement year by year. From no A\*-C grades the subject is now attaining as well as any other subject in the school and, since 2000, all pupils have attained at least a G grade. Each year, the number of pupils taking GCSE in music has grown proportionally with the number in the year group. The proportion of pupils taking music for GCSE is almost double the national average. In teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2002 results were in line with the average for girls nationally.
175. In Year 9, standards of work seen during the inspection are close to the national average: standards in Year 11 are below average. Given their low level of ability on entry, pupils achieve well to progress to this standard by Year 9. Given also that most pupils taking GCSE in Year 11 have not had the advantage of individual instrumental lessons and come from the full breadth of the school's ability range, their achievement in Years 10 and 11 compared to the usual make-up of GCSE classes is also good. During the inspection, the closure of the school for almost one day and the absence of Year 11 on examination leave, reduced substantially the amount of observation possible. The daylong power cut also severely limited the opportunity to hear pupils' recorded work. It was necessary, therefore, to validate the standards seen against the teachers' assessment results. The teachers' assessment information is judged to be reliable.
176. In Years 7 to 9 pupils learn to perform at keyboards, while developing a range of techniques for composition. For example, in a mixed ability Year 8 class pupils were able to co-ordinate the bass and chords for a blues sequence well, able to use the recording facilities of the keyboards well to do this in pairs or individually. By Year 9, they play well, using appropriate fingering technique and are also able to improvise creatively. While they read musical notation in a limited fashion, they do not write it. They evaluate their own music and music from a wide variety of styles, using appropriate vocabulary well to describe the technical and emotional content of the music. In Years 10 and 11, those who learn instruments out of class do best. With a much greater number of such pupils in Year 10, standards are comparatively higher in Year 10 than in Year 11. Pupils seen revising for examinations in Year 11 used vocabulary well, but showed a very wide range of ability. In Year 10, the large class performed and improvised Latin American rhythms on percussion instruments with accuracy, cohesion and enjoyment. They record these performances to keyboards, where they edit, refine and develop them to form original compositions.
177. The quality of teaching is very good in all years. The teachers' subject knowledge is good, demonstrating well to clarify the pupils' understanding. This is enhanced by very clear strategies and routines to ensure pupils know precisely what to expect from a lesson and by very good questioning technique, which ensures all pupils are made to think and to apply what they have learned. Where experts enhance curricular provision, such as in the Year 10 Latin American percussion class, the teaching of practical skills is excellent, developing both the pupils' abilities and their powers of concentration to a very high level. Lessons are planned such that more able pupils have appropriate extension work. In the Year 8 blues lessons, for example, some were encouraged to improvise above the chords and bass. Teachers are well aware of those pupils with

special educational needs and English as an additional language and adapt work appropriately to enable them to progress well at all times. Worksheets tailored to the pupils' levels of ability are used well, especially when developing aural perception and response. In some cases, however, their format does not give enough room for pupils to express themselves in sentences. However, aspects of literacy are taught well, with pupils acquiring confidence in using language appropriate to the subject through emphasis on key words and using writing frames. There is less satisfactory teaching of mathematical concepts through music. Teaching of ICT skills through music is limited by the lack of resources other than keyboards. The library does, however, have computers that enable music to be heard online, but the lack of formal homework in Years 7 to 9 of a research nature means this resource is not exploited and learning opportunities are lost. Informal homework to learn to perform pieces is generally well done, as pupils' motivation is very high and they are eager to make use of the keyboards during their breaks. Overall, their attitudes to the subject are very good.

178. The schemes of work are good. They are well balanced and include regular assessments to help teachers track the pupils' progress and evaluation by pupils of their own progress in order to set realistic targets for improvement. The implementation of some whole-school policies are not formalised, such as numeracy and spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. This last, however, is very good in music. The whole school was touched by the expressive impulse of the large gospel choir at an assembly and the Latin American drumming in Year 10 transcended technique to express the joy of emotional and musical interaction. A large and impressive cross-curricular project on an ethnic theme dominates the summer term for pupils in Years 7 to 9, exposing them intensely to three different world cultures before the GCSE years. The many cultural opportunities, stemming from initiatives to which the school is partner, greatly enhance provision. Recent expansion has led to about a fifth of pupils, mostly from younger classes, taking instrumental or singing lessons from seven visiting teachers. These are sponsored in part by the school, in part by the LEA and are free to all pupils. Two further visiting staff run the gospel choir. Steel pans were observed being taught very well. Recent collaborations with musicians in the community have led to opportunities for more able pupils to perform with professional musicians and attend Gamelan and DJ-ing courses.
179. The department is very well led and managed as part of the expressive arts faculty, creating a strong ethos for music in the school. Since the previous inspection the subject has made very good progress: courses in Years 10 and 11 are now established, growing and promising even higher standards; opportunities for extension work abound; teaching in Years 7 to 9 has improved. While new keyboards have improved the ICT provision, the lack of computers and music software in the department places pupils at a disadvantage in composition work for GCSE. The unresolved issue of the practice rooms being well away from the main teaching room still limits the opportunity for group work with different instruments required in Years 7 to 9. The proximity of the hall to the main music room also impairs the quality of teaching with about half of all lessons being disturbed by sound penetrating from the hall. These issues, in particular, need to be addressed to bring about further improvement.



## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

### Strengths

- The teaching and learning of dance is good
- Achievement of pupils on examination courses is good
- Leadership of the department is strong and visionary

### Areas for development

- Teaching and learning of games at ages 11-14 is unsatisfactory
- Assessment procedures need to better inform teaching and learning

180. By ages 14 and 16, standards of high-attaining students are average, although standards overall are below average. This is reflected in the 2002 GCSE examination results in both dance and physical education (PE). Results are comparable with those of other non-core subjects within the school, with most students meeting their predicted grade. Whilst most pupils make steady progress in Years 7-9, there is significant underachievement in standards of games, partly related to the limited use of assessment information and underdevelopment of pupils' evaluation skills. Most pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 10 and 11; students taking examinations in the subject make good progress. The progress of pupils with special educational needs follows a similar pattern but students with English as an additional language do not always receive the help they need in the theoretical aspects of examination courses. Too few students reach the very highest standards because their talents are not sufficiently developed through inter-school competitive sport. However, the school has some success in athletics both at local and London schools levels. The standard of dance is average but that of both gymnastics and netball is below average. Since the last inspection good progress has been made within the last year in addressing issues, such as combining the management of PE and dance. Overall progress has been unsatisfactory because standards are largely unchanged.
181. By Year 9 most students know how to warm up effectively and with understanding, as observed in a Year 9 dance lesson. All girls appreciated differences in style between ballet and contemporary dance and could explain this using correct technical language such as 'fluidity,' 'flair,' and 'motif.' Higher-attaining girls effectively contrasted these styles in their performances which were conducted with poise, clarity and creativity. In gymnastics a significant minority of low attaining students are underachieving. For example, they are unable to perform basic skills such as a forward roll. Progress is slowest in games lessons where the majority of students have poor ball handling skills, co-ordination and spatial awareness and this is partly because teaching is insufficiently challenging. Fitness levels overall are too low because there is insufficient on health related fitness emphasis in the curriculum.
182. In Year 10 all students, both on the dance and physical education examination courses, are meeting requirements mostly at below average grades. Practical work is of a higher standard than written work where students find the technical, anatomical and physiological terms and concepts, such as the blood circulatory system, difficult to learn and to write about. Students made good progress in a core netball lesson seen in developing the tactics of blocking, back-line and centre pass. In a games context, they effectively implemented skills learnt with flashes of inspiration.

183. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. It is sometimes very good but in Years 7-9 there also is some unsatisfactory teaching. Strengths in teaching most often show themselves in the management of pupils, high expectations and very challenging work set in dance, and a range of tasks in gymnastics which meet the needs of different pupils. Literacy skills are developed effectively in most lessons, such as the use of speaking frames, re-enforcing pupils' technical knowledge. In the best lesson seen, the teacher set high expectations, both by way of lesson planning and personal example, developing both performance and literacy skills and matching the work closely to students' interest and aspirations as dancers. Consequently, most students attained a standard of work which was beyond that expected in terms of quality of movement, understanding and expression. In unsatisfactory lessons, teachers' expectations are low as assessment information is not used fully; work set does not match the needs of students; and pupils are too inactive. In such lessons, students fail to develop their basic skills, learn new work or develop understanding sufficiently well. Although students can be challenging, their frustration is largely due to lack of success in games lessons. They generally behave well.
184. Leadership of the department is strong, dynamic and visionary. Priorities for development are generally correctly identified. However, assessment procedures need to be more clearly identified and linked between national curriculum requirements, schemes of work and lesson planning, so that students know what they have to do to improve and teachers how to plan work. There are various opportunities for pupils to be involved in extra-curricular activities provided by the department. Whilst wide in range, they are not deep or consistent enough to extend, reinforce and develop games skills to higher competitive levels. Lack of information technology facilities hinders the work of the department. Since the appointment of a new departmental head, facilities have improved and risk assessments have been written. The department is now set fair to raise achievement.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

### Strengths

- Standards achieved in GCSE short course in 2001 and 2002 – just below the national average for A\*-C grades, in line with the average for A\*-G grades and the proportion of A\* or A grades is high
- Teaching is good: lessons are taught with enthusiasm and enable pupils to learn effectively
- Good relationships, attitudes and behaviour result in a positive working environment

### Areas for improvement

- A significant number of pupils do not listen to each other in discussions, preferring, instead, to continue expressing their own point of view

185. Standards of attainment are below the expectations of the Lambeth agreed syllabus for religious education by the end of Year 9. Standards in the short course GCSE, taken by all pupils, are just below the national average in terms of A\*-C grades but in line with the percentage of pupils achieving grades A\*-G. However, the proportion of pupils achieving A\* or A grades is high. Standards in work seen during the inspection show that the percentage of girls likely to achieve grades A\*-C is rising so that standards by the end of Year 11 are now broadly average. Girls show a basic knowledge of major religions and some of their distinctive features. During Years 7 to 9 they learn about

major world faiths and come to appreciate the ways in which such faiths affect daily life and practice. Pupils in Year 10 and 11 expand this knowledge and understanding through exploring Christian and Muslim perspectives on issues such as abortion, the environment and marriage. Pupils' writing shows a range of styles used for particular purposes, although literacy levels are generally below average and girls often show a greater depth of knowledge and thought in their oral than in their written work. The department is working hard to improve literacy levels, however, through the provision of carefully structured tasks and activities designed to increase pupils' confidence in speaking and writing. Pupils are beginning to use specialist vocabulary with growing confidence.

186. The achievement of pupils in all year groups is good. Pupils with special educational needs or those for whom English is an additional language make similar rates of progress to those of their peers. Pupils in all year groups are led to realise that religious education has a practical application to everyday life and are enabled to consider their own beliefs and values about a wide range of moral and ethical issues. This was evident, for example, in a Year 10 lesson where pupils considered issues of prejudice and stereotyping. Pupils form their own ideas on important issues and apply their knowledge to current situations. The quality of the teaching, together with the positive attitudes demonstrated by pupils, enables girls of all abilities to make clear and steady gains in their knowledge and understanding.
187. Pupils in religious education are enthusiastic, eager to learn and tolerant of each other's beliefs. Classroom relationships are positive. Pupils respond well to difficult challenges and in so doing, explore ways in which different faiths approach moral and ethical issues. A Year 8 lesson, for example, looked at some of the different ways artists from various cultures have portrayed Jesus and why this might be important. Although pupils are very keen to participate in discussion, a significant number find it difficult to listen carefully when classmates are talking, preferring, instead, to continue expressing their own point of view.
188. The quality of teaching is good overall, with some significant strengths. Teachers are knowledgeable in all aspects of the subject. Objectives are clear and good quality questioning builds on pupils' responses taking their learning forward. Lessons build on pupils' knowledge and experience, and appropriate strategies are used to ensure that content and approaches are matched to pupils' needs. Activities are well structured to enable pupils to maintain levels of concentration and to feel more confident about their work. Contemporary examples or shared experiences are used to show how belief affects people's lives and actions. This was evident, for example, in a Year 10 lesson where a female Muslim stand-up comedian was used as an example of how faith might affect action. Key vocabulary is introduced systematically. The atmosphere in classrooms is positive and teachers are good role models for the subject. Marking is thorough with comments and targets indicating where pupils have done well and where they need to direct further effort.
189. The leadership of the subject is good. Significant progress has been made since the last inspection. Statutory requirements to teach religious education to all registered pupils are fully met. Religious education makes a significant contribution to citizenship and to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Teachers work well as a team, sharing good practice with each other. There is a clear commitment to raising standards.