

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MICHAEL'S RC SCHOOL

Bermondsey, Southwark

LEA area: Southwark

Unique reference number: 100858

Headteacher: Mr Martin Tissot

Reporting inspector: Mr David H Roberts
7582

Dates of inspection: 12th - 15th May 2003

Inspection number: 249086

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Modern (non-selective)
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	11 – 16 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Fr Gregory Moore
Date of previous inspection:	13 th January 1997

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9588	A P West	Lay inspector	Community links	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
6044	R Perkins	Team inspector	Business studies Economics Mathematics	
20533	D Rogers	Team inspector	Art	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
17694	J Forrest	Team inspector	Science	
23550	M Blewitt	Team inspector	Modern languages	
1578	M Sinclair	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Citizenship	
20537	K Ball	Team inspector	Geography	
17530	M Cureton	Team inspector	English	
8360	F W Peacock	Team inspector	Music	
17987	B Coates	Team inspector	Physical education Education inclusion	
22491	L Small	Team inspector	Design and technology	
14490	S B Jackson	Team inspector	English as an additional language	
30317	E Barthaud	Team inspector	History	How well is the school led and managed?
28002	S Taylor	Team inspector	Special educational needs	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Michael's is a relatively small mixed Catholic school for 613 pupils aged 11 to 16, established in 1959 on a somewhat restricted site within an estate of public housing. Pupils come from a large number of Catholic primary schools in a number of London boroughs, and beyond. There is a rich ethnic mix. One third of the pupils (high by national comparison) are from families where English is not the first language, although very few of the pupils themselves are unfamiliar with the language. About a half of the pupils (well above the national average) have an entitlement to free school meals. Twenty-two pupils have statements of special educational need, a proportion broadly in line with the national average. The proportion of other pupils identified by the school as having special educational needs is also in line with the national average. There are eight per cent more boys than girls. Due to the balance of alternative provision of Catholic education in this part of London, the average test scores of girls entering the school is somewhat lower than that of boys. Overall, the levels of attainment on entry are in line with those in schools which serve similar populations but are below the national average. The number of pupils at the school has been relatively stable but governors agreed with the LEA to admit an additional class of eleven year olds in the current year. The school has been designated a Beacon School since 2000 and has recently acquired specialist status as a Business and Enterprise College and as a designated Training School. It is part of Southwark's Excellence in Cities programme.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a deservedly popular school, highly regarded by the pupils and their parents and carers. It achieves standards which, while below the national overall average, are well above the national average for similar schools. Pupils make satisfactory progress while at the school. They have very good attitudes towards learning and their behaviour is good overall. There is good teaching in a number of subjects and very little which is unsatisfactory. It provides a good range of learning opportunities through its taught curriculum and other activities. The headteacher has a very clear vision for the future direction of the school and much has been achieved through his determined leadership. The school has continued to improve satisfactorily since its last inspection in 1997 and remains a good school, providing good value for money.

What the school does well

- Provides good teaching and leadership in English, design and technology and geography; very good teaching and leadership in history and modern foreign languages
- Ensures positive pupil attitudes and behaviour
- Secures good relationships among pupils and between pupils and staff, ensuring that all feel valued and included
- Makes very good provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural elements of school life
- Has very good procedures for monitoring absence and anti-social behaviour and for securing improvements in both
- Develops and maintains very productive links with the community and partner institutions

What could be improved

- Results in mathematics and science and those of girls in English and a number of other subjects
- The effectiveness of the school's improvement planning, with the headteacher's long-term vision at the forefront, and the co-ordination of the school's key policies to ensure consistent approaches to improvement
- The use of the data on pupils' performance which the school already collects to secure further improvement in their achievements
- Provision of information and communication technology (ICT) lessons for all older pupils
- The rigour with which governors carry out some of their responsibilities, including those relating to health and safety

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in January 1997 and judged to be a good school with many strengths. A number of areas for improvement was also identified. There have been improvements in teaching quality in some subjects; results have improved in some subjects; the learning environment has been greatly improved recently; the school is beginning to make good use of pupil performance data; it has acquired the status of Beacon School, of specialist college and of training school, all marks of quality. There has not been the required improvement thus far in mathematics and science results but management is now effectively tackling the unsatisfactory provision in these subjects. Overall, improvement has been satisfactory.

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				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
GCSE examinations	C	C	D	A	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E

GCSE results in 2002 were best in English, ICT, art, history, food technology, geography, graphics and business studies; they were weakest in modern foreign languages, physical education, textiles, mathematics and science. The school's improvement trend in GCSE examinations has been below the national trend. In national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2002, results were below the national average but well above the average for schools with similar levels of entitlement to free school meals. The improvement trend has been in line with the national trend with English results consistently better than those for mathematics and science. Overall, pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress. Results at both the end of Year 9 and in GCSE were well below the targets set by governors.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good: pupils take great pride in their school and are supportive of each other. The great majority show a high level of enthusiasm and engage well with their school work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good in lessons, assemblies, around the school outside lesson time and in travelling to and from the school with a general absence of anti-social behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Good relationships among pupils and between them and staff; pupils and staff respect one another's feelings, values and beliefs very well.
Attendance	Satisfactory – broadly in line with the national average, with unauthorised absence lower than the national average.

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 in English is good overall; it is also good in science in Years 10 and 11. It is satisfactory in mathematics and, for the younger age groups, in science. In other subjects, teaching is best in history and modern foreign languages and is also generally good in design and technology and ICT. It is better overall in Years 10 and 11 than in the lower years. Literacy and numeracy are taught satisfactorily overall within other subjects. Frequently observed strengths lie in the subject knowledge of the teachers, the way they plan their lessons, their management of pupils' behaviour and their use of the resources available to them. Homework is used well in most subjects. Teaching generally meets the needs of the full range of pupils. Where the teaching is good, pupils put good effort into their work and acquire new knowledge and skills effectively. They work with increasing independence as they get older, in response to the better range of methods used by teachers. Pupils with special educational needs learn satisfactorily, and better as they progress through the school because of the generally better teaching for older pupils.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. It meets the needs of all pupils throughout their time at the school (except ICT in Years 10/11), with some appropriate innovations.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Pupils' needs are effectively identified and planned for. Additional support in lessons, where provided, is good although there is insufficient liaison between subject teachers and support staff.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. There is an improving consciousness of the needs of these pupils; monitoring of their progress needs further development.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	There is a very good spiritual dimension, stemming from the overarching Christian ethos, encompassing all facets of school life, although it is less well developed in lessons. Very good moral development throughout all aspects of school life with fairness, integrity and respect for people from all races and cultures paramount. Very good social development – pupils mix well and there is much reinforcement of belonging together through assemblies, team activities, residential courses and school productions. Very good cultural development through a wide range of visits reinforcing the school's cultural values. Teaching values all cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Several good and very good features, particularly relating to attendance and behaviour, but unsatisfactory health and safety procedures leading to risks.

The school works well in partnership with pupils, parents and carers and provides them with good information about their children's progress. Parents rightly welcome this as it helps them to support their children's life and work at school. There is good provision for activities outside lessons, including extra lessons on Saturdays, and for personal, health and social education, and careers education. Details of

the inspectors' serious concerns about aspects of health and safety have been passed to the headteacher. Governors will need to address these with urgency. Statutory requirements for the teaching of ICT to all pupils in Years 10 and 11 are not met currently.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory overall – the headteacher and leadership group manage the school well; under the head's determined leadership, the school is now in a position to build on its present strengths.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are regularly involved with school life and are very supportive of the head; they are developing in their role as critical friends; their approach to some of their responsibilities lacks sufficient rigour – unsatisfactory overall.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. Recently developed procedures and line-management arrangements are leading to improvements.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. There has been effective use of additional funding accessed from a number of sources to support improvements at the school; there have been issues about financial administration drawn to the school's attention by auditors.

The school, through sometimes strenuous and innovative strategies, has achieved a satisfactory match of teachers to the needs of the curriculum. Accommodation is very well maintained and is sufficient overall but with shortcomings in provision for drama and physical education. One workshop provides an unsafe environment due to ineffective dust extraction. There is good provision of learning resources including provision of computers at twice the national average for a school of this size. The school adopts the principles of best value when renewing contracts for the supply of services, for example catering.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school's high expectations of what their children will achieve • That their children like going to school and are making good progress • That teaching is of good quality • That they are comfortable about approaching the school with queries and problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities outside lessons

Inspectors' judgements broadly support the views of parents although they note that, while good teaching is found, there is room for improvement in some subjects. Inspectors consider that the school provides a good range of activities outside lessons.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Based on the average points scored per pupil in the three core subjects (English, mathematics and science), the school's results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were below the national average. However, the results were well above the average for schools with similar levels of entitlement to free school meals and broadly in line with schools whose pupils had a similar level of attainment on entry.
2. The trend of improvement in these results since 1998 has been broadly in line with the national trend. Over these years, results in mathematics and science have been consistently weaker than in English. In this subject, pupils' performance has in fact exceeded the national average, while in mathematics and science it has been significantly below it. In English, boys' performance exceeded the national average for boys while that for girls fell below their national average. In mathematics and science, girls' performance fell further below their gender average than did that of boys.
3. Pupils' attainment in the end of Year 9 tests has not yet reached the targets which governors have set. However, these targets have not been based sufficiently well on pupils' prior attainment data and have been unrealistically high. It is clear, however, that there has been underperformance in both mathematics and science over recent years.
4. The results in the GCSE (and equivalent) examinations taken by Year 11 pupils in 2002, based on the average point score per pupil, were below the national average and showed some decline over the previous year. However, based on the last three years' results, they have been close to the national average. Boys' results were close to the national average for boys but girls' results were below their national average. Due to the school's relatively weaker results in 2000 and 2002, the school's trend of improvement since 1998 has lagged behind the national trend.
5. As with the Year 9 tests, the school's GCSE results in 2002, when compared to schools with similar levels of free school meals entitlement, are well above average and broadly in line with those for schools whose pupils had similar attainment on starting their GCSE course.
6. GCSE results in 2002 were best in English, ICT, history, art, food technology, geography, graphics and business studies and weakest in modern foreign languages, physical education, textiles, mathematics and science.
7. Results in 2002 were significantly below the targets set by governors but these were unrealistically high. The relatively weaker performance of girls at the end of both Year 9 and Year 11 reflects the analysis which the school has conducted into pupils' attainment on entry. This shows a somewhat higher proportion of girls entering at a level below the national expectation.
8. The standard of work seen in lessons during this inspection was average overall but with too much variability. It was well above average in history but below average in mathematics and science. Pupils were judged to be making satisfactory progress overall, with relative strengths in English, design and technology (in Years 7 to 9), geography and in history where progress was very good.

9. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall. Pupils aged 11 to 14 make good progress in their lessons and pupils aged 15 and 16 make satisfactory progress in lessons. There is a well-attended and purposeful reading group before school, where most pupils make very good progress with improvement of their reading ages. The work of pupils with statements of special educational need indicates generally good progress towards the objectives on their statements. The progress made by pupils for whom English is not the first language is satisfactory overall. It is in line with that made by other pupils, including performance at the higher levels, for instance in GCSE history examinations. Pupils which the school identifies as having particular gifts and talents make good progress as a result of the well co-ordinated and well resourced provision which the school has put in place.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. As in the previous inspection, the pupils' attitudes towards their school are very good. The pupils take pride in their school, they are very supportive of one another and willingly uphold the inclusive ethos and rules of the school. The great majority of pupils seen in lessons engage well in their work, concentrate hard and have very positive attitudes towards their learning.
11. In the last academic year, the school records show one permanent exclusion and twenty-one fixed period exclusions that included an over representation of black boys. The school is conscious of this imbalance and works effectively to understand and support the needs of all pupils at risk of exclusion.
12. During the inspection, behaviour in lessons and around the school was judged as good. In some classes during the inspection the quality of pupils' behaviour was often directly related to the pupils' abilities or the quality of the teaching. Inspectors found that the majority of pupils behave well, listen attentively, follow instructions and settle quickly to the tasks given.
13. When pupils were taken out of school on a walk to discover and learn about local historical sites close to the school, the Year 8 pupils demonstrated that they were eager to be involved, they wanted to contribute and to learn. They mostly behaved and concentrated well, absorbing the information they were given. The pupils followed their teacher's instructions and appreciated his enthusiasm and knowledge.
14. Pupils are well behaved in assemblies and when they move around the school. In the playground areas, when they use public transport and when they mix with the general public, pupils' behaviour is good.
15. The great majority of pupils are aware of right and wrong and comply with school and class rules. If any disruption or any bullying does arise, pupils and parents confirm that members of staff handle the affair very well and limit any effects. The majority of pupils follow the very good role models provided by all members of staff, by being polite and courteous. No examples of any oppressive behaviour, sexism or racism were seen during the inspection and the great majority of pupils understand the effect of their behaviour on others. The pupils handle resources such as musical instruments, subject materials, computer equipment and books appropriately. They form orderly queues and wait their turn, helping to ensure that the complex arrangements at lunchtime operate smoothly.

16. Personal development and relationships within the school are good. Pupils and staff enjoy good relationships and pupils confirm that they are happy to talk to members of staff if they have a problem. Pupils accept fellow pupils who may come from different backgrounds or who may have a range of abilities or difficulties. Pupils in years ten and eleven act as school prefects, assisting in the administration of discipline within the school.
17. Pupils are involved in collections for a range of charities and take up roles and responsibilities assigned to them. Although the opportunities for them to take initiative and personal responsibility are limited to an extent by the styles of the school management and teaching, there is evidence that responsibility is given to pupils for their learning and for the setting of their personal learning targets. Pupils are encouraged to use their initiative, to work independently and also to work collaboratively. The school also supports all pupils well, in providing them with opportunities to acquire life skills, including leadership qualities, obtaining careers advice and providing them with opportunities to engage in the worlds of work and further and higher education. Pupils have the opportunity to develop their life-skills on a wide range of school activities and as a result, mature into very personable, responsible and hard working young adults.
18. In the previous inspection, attendance was noted as better than similar local schools and in line with the national average. For this inspection in the reporting period 2001 to 2002, attendance in the school was broadly in-line with national averages, with unauthorised absence, over the same period, better than the national average. The school confirms that attendance is still not as high as it would like and that over the school year to date, absences were highest amongst pupils in Year 10 where a number of pupils have specific attendance problems. The school confirms that medical reasons, additional holidays and education off site remain the most significant reasons overall for pupils' absences. Of those pupils who are late for morning registration, public transport difficulties are the most reported reasons. The registration of pupils at the start of morning sessions and during afternoon sessions is handled efficiently and productively. Arrangements for recording attendance and categorising absences fully comply with legal requirements.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19. The quality of teaching seen in this inspection was at least satisfactory in 94 per cent of lessons overall, and somewhat better in Years 10 and 11. In 62 per cent of lessons overall, it was good or very good, again with a slightly higher proportion in Years 10 and 11. These proportions, particularly of good teaching, are somewhat below the national figures from inspection. The quality of teaching, taken overall, is therefore judged to be satisfactory with elements of good and very good practice in a number of subjects.
20. Teachers generally have a good knowledge of their subject. This benefits the way they present subject matter to pupils, who respond well in consciously acquiring new knowledge, skills and understanding. This is particularly strong in English, history and modern foreign language teaching. The teaching of basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT is satisfactory overall. Specific literacy skills are well taught in English, history, geography, modern languages and design and technology. Technical, subject specific language is well promoted in science, drama, mathematics, music and physical education, all of which improves pupils' learning. There are good examples of the teaching of numeracy skills in some subjects. For instance, in science, pupils calculate wavelengths and frequencies from wave patterns. In geography, older pupils interpret bar graphs competently but younger pupils struggle with climate graphs. In physical

education, the provision for numeracy is insufficiently planned. The teaching of ICT skills in other subjects to support learning is just satisfactory. Good work was seen in one science lesson and Year 10 geography pupils make frequent use of ICT while control is taught successfully in design and technology in Years 7 to 9.

21. Teachers' planning of lessons is good, taken overall, with particular strengths in history and modern languages. Weaknesses are apparent in art in Years 7 to 9 and music in Years 10 and 11. Teachers' expectations of what pupils should be able to achieve are satisfactory overall. In a number of subjects (notably history, modern languages, geography, design and technology, ICT and, in Years 10 and 11, in science), the teaching offers more challenge to pupils and they respond well to this, giving additional effort to their work. This is particularly good in geography, history and modern languages.
22. Teachers use methods which satisfactorily enable the full range of pupils to learn effectively. There are particular strengths in the approaches used in history, English, modern languages, design and technology, geography and ICT. In history, teachers' careful use of question and answer within each lesson ensures that all pupils are included. There are weaknesses in music in Years 10 and 11. Teachers generally manage pupils' time in lessons well leading to appropriate standards of behaviour, although there is variability between classes in Years 7 to 9. The level of interest which pupils show in their work is better in Years 10 and 11 than in the earlier years in a number of subjects (English, science, art, ICT). Pupil management is strongest in English, geography, history and modern languages. Teachers make good use of the full lesson length and the learning resources at their disposal. As a result, pupils make productive use of lesson time, working at a good pace.
23. Teachers generally have a satisfactory approach to assessing pupils' work. Developments in history and English have been particularly effective with pupils successfully involved in monitoring their own progress. Tracking systems in these subjects ensure careful monitoring of the progress of each pupil, helping them to understand how they can improve. The use made of homework is generally good and is effective in reinforcing what pupils have learned in lessons.
24. Pupils with special educational needs usually work in their class group, but are very occasionally withdrawn for specific tuition in basic skills. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs in subject lessons is variable, but overall it is good for pupils in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory for pupils in Years 10 and 11, where there is less special support provided. Good quality individual education plans provide clear targets for pupils and a range of good quality information about strategies and approaches is provided by the special needs department. However, although teachers are aware of the wealth of information provided, they often do not use this to plan for lessons, provide adapted teaching strategies and resources, and adjust lesson content.
25. The learning support staff, who are both teachers and teaching assistants, are knowledgeable about the needs of the pupils they are supporting and provide sufficient help and challenge to enable them to become increasingly independent in their learning. They are very aware of the progress made by individual pupils towards the targets on their individual education plans and provide input to the twice-yearly reviews. However, there is insufficient planning for lessons between subject teachers and learning support staff, losing valuable opportunities for full involvement of the support staff, such as team teaching. This reduces the effectiveness of support.

26. Entry assessment data are effectively used to identify pupils with special educational needs and there are clear systems in place to identify these pupils after they have entered the school. Good quality Individual Education Plans are written by the special educational needs support staff and some teachers add subject specific targets. Pupils with English as an additional language are effectively identified by most teachers but their needs are not always planned for in lessons.

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

27. The school provides a good curriculum which meets pupils' needs throughout their time in school within the current staffing and accommodation constraints. A good balance has been achieved between academic and vocational courses, ensuring a choice of courses which suits aspirations and attainment levels, as well as preparing pupils for further education and employment. Pupils with special educational needs have full access to the curriculum.
28. The formal taught curriculum is well supported by a wide and varied programme of extra curricular activities, enrichment and support. In addition to the subject strengths in this area in history, music, drama, ICT and mathematics, there are additional whole school opportunities allowing pupils to participate in Saturday clubs, Duke of Edinburgh Awards, residential experiences, musical and theatrical events
29. The school is working hard to implement the national Key Stage 3 strategy. The promotion of literacy in the curriculum is satisfactory. The school's cross-curricular policy, based on the national literacy strategy, is of excellent quality and is well supported by the school library. Management of the strategy, however, is not sufficiently rigorous to ensure that it is being applied consistently in the work of all departments. Many opportunities to promote language and learning are missed as a result although most subject areas provide satisfactory opportunities for pupils to develop basic skills. Pupils with special educational needs are taught in lessons with their peers with very little withdrawal for work on individual literacy programmes.
30. The promotion of numeracy across the curriculum is satisfactory overall but is at an early stage of development. There is a clear policy and the whole staff training that has taken place is beginning to bear fruit. There are missed opportunities for mental work. Mathematics teaching does not always recognise the enlivening potential of using real examples from other subjects. Since September 2002, all pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 receive two hours of teaching in information and communication technology. All pupils are working to targets in these skills in English, mathematics and science.
31. There are deficiencies in time allocation which currently affect the balance of the curriculum in modern foreign languages, art and music in Years 7, 8 and 9. This is the result of specialist staff shortages in these areas this year which the school is doing all it can to resolve.
32. The school has made effective arrangements for a particular group of disaffected pupils in Year 11. They have been attending locally based work related courses for two days each week, gaining experience in either building, plumbing or motor mechanics skills. These courses can lead eventually to GNVQ accreditation. This has resulted in their improved attitudes and attendance levels in school. All ten are entered for examinations in other core areas. Another group of pupils is taking the GNVQ course in health and social care as an alternative to 'double' science, as a course judged to be more appropriate to their needs and more likely to bring them success.

33. Pupils who speak Spanish or French at home can take mother tongue GCSE early and have the opportunity to study the other language in school. Saturday lessons are available to Year 10 pupils who did not choose a language as an option.
34. Bridging units, catch up programmes, booster classes and a series of English lessons during the Easter holiday are some of the actions the school is taking to improve levels of attainment for those pupils who are identified by the school in Year 7 as underachievers. Data was not available during the inspection to determine just how successful these initiatives have been in improving levels of attainment, year on year in the lower school, for those pupils with low prior attainment. A system of lesson monitoring and subsequent reports has been successfully introduced in order to identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning outcomes. Professional development courses for staff have resulted from these findings. The impact of these courses is not yet evaluated.
35. The school's provision for gifted and talented pupils, part of the national Excellence in Cities initiative is very good. Ten per cent of pupils are reliably assessed as gifted academically or talented in the fields of music, drama or physical education. There are approximately ten gifted pupils and five talented pupils in each year of the school. Careful and thorough interviewing gives the school a rounded picture of each pupil's interests and achievements. A specialist certificate of achievement records their progress. Additional resources are provided in all subjects and in the library to challenge and extend these pupils. A suite of computers is provided for their sole use. Additional courses provided range from philosophy to advanced aspects of computer knowledge and football skills. There are very good opportunities for pupils to meet pupils from other schools and broaden their horizons. Opportunities for residential experience have included a school chemistry camp at St Andrew's University, summer school at Warwick University and a mathematics course at Cambridge. Co-ordination of provision is excellent.
36. There are areas where curriculum provision can be more effective. In design and technology, work in textiles has had to be discontinued because of specialist teacher shortage. In art, the range of curriculum experiences and opportunities for ICT are limited. In physical education in Years 7 to 9, only three areas of activity are offered instead of the four prescribed. In Years 10 and 11, the provision for information and communication technology does not meet statutory requirements. There are approximately 60 per cent of the pupils who do not take discrete courses in this subject and the cross curriculum provision is not fulfilling national curriculum requirements.
37. Provision for personal, social and health education is good. The course is well planned. A new co-ordinator took responsibility in January and already schemes of work are being thoroughly revised and resources have been audited. There is good support for the eight teachers delivering the course. Pupils in all year groups are timetabled for one hour each week. In Year 10, pupils receive one hour of a citizenship course each week. This is a GCSE short course which the school is planning to extend to full accreditation next year. In Year 11, the personal, social and health education course concentrates on assisting pupils in the successful compilation of their National Record of Achievement file, and providing good guidance in careers education and approaches to examination revision.
38. The careers and vocational guidance is good with a very committed management team and some very good features. Careers guidance is taught within the personal, social and health education curriculum with pupils in Years 9 to 11 targeted this year. Next

year the provision will be extended to all pupils in line with the national curriculum framework. Pupils appreciate the advice and support they are given in this area.

39. A number of visitors contribute to personal, social and health education lessons and other events to provide pupils with advice on a wide range of career paths and the educational choices open to them. The Connexions adviser is now working with underachieving Year 10 pupils in order to motivate them before entering Year 11. All pupils are given advice and support whatever their needs and background. Pupils with specific need are provided with additional support.
40. Work experience is organised for all pupils in Year 10 for two-week placements. All assignments are vetted and the great majority of pupils is visited on site by a school representative. The scheme has been very successful and popular with pupils. Last year a highlight was the placement of twenty pupils on a media project for the Greater London Authority.
41. The school has embarked on Excellence Challenge (part of the Excellence in Cities programme), involving college and university students coming in to school and challenging the pupils' career aspirations. The school has also organised a business studies conference and visits to university colleges for younger pupils to challenge their views on higher education.
42. The school's approach to the spiritual development of its pupils is very strong and there is an overwhelming Christian ethos which encompasses all facets of school life. The promotion of Christian values such as serving others, being tolerant, prayerful and forgiving are hallmarks of the school. Pupils explore values and beliefs through Christian-based assemblies, the Friday mass and special masses for Saints' days and holy days. Opportunities also exist for private prayer in the chapel and each lesson starts and usually finishes with a prayer. Pupils in RE lessons study aspects of Buddhism, Islam and Hinduism and as part of a project on Judaism they visit a synagogue, sample the Seder meal at Passover and have talks from a visiting rabbi. Off-site retreat programmes enrich pupils' spiritual life. In lessons observed, reflection on the awe, wonder and beauty of life through literature, science and the arts was less obvious although in one telling example in English pupils discussed the cycle of life in Heaney's poem *The Follower*.
43. Pupils' moral development is also very strong. The school's moral code is promoted consistently throughout all aspects of school life with fairness, integrity and respect for people of all races and cultures being paramount. Pupils understand the difference between right and wrong; they know these boundaries and most pupils respect school rules. Discipline is based on Christian caring and respect for the individual with an emphasis on good behaviour. Rewards encourage pupils to conform to the school's values and beliefs. Bullying, racism or aggression are not tolerated and those who behave inappropriately are dealt with in a framework of fairness and justice for the good of themselves and the whole school community. Reconciliation is a strength of the school and this takes place between pupils who have disagreements: they are expected to propose ways in which a situation can be put right. There are opportunities to explore moral concepts in tutor time, personal, social and health education and citizenship lessons and in the retreat programmes. Pupils are set moral dilemmas in religious education lessons and examine issues of the day such as drug abuse, sexual relations, racial discrimination and the workings of the democratic process.
44. The school is very successful in developing a spirit where pupils' social well-being is fostered through friendship groups, tutor groups and harmonious relationships between

all races. The school believes it is a safe haven for all pupils irrespective of race or colour. Pupils mix well and there is much reinforcement of belonging together through assemblies, team activities, residential experiences and school concerts and productions. There is mutual respect and high ideals of participation and involvement. Year 7 pupils spend a residential induction weekend at the school's study centre in Hampshire where they really get to know each other and their tutors. The weekly youth club presents opportunities in sporting, musical, artistic and computer clubs and there are also ski trips, field trips and a variety of study-linked educational trips in Britain and in Europe. Pupils take responsibility as prefects and have the opportunity to exercise leadership. This is further strengthened by the leadership retreats for Year 11 pupils. Positive links with the world of work and the wider community help pupils grow in maturity. Pupils are also prominent in raising money for causes.

45. Pupils' cultural development is secured very well. There are opportunities to participate in clubs, including sport and the arts. Visits take place to galleries, theatres and concerts and there are displays and exhibitions reinforcing the school's cultural values. Music pupils visit the London Jazz Festival, see performances of *Les Misérables* and play at the opening of the Bermondsey Festival. Organised trips allow pupils to experience life in Italy, France and Spain to broaden their horizons. Teachers value all cultures visibly and some subjects assist pupils in their awareness of different cultural heritages through literature, languages and world music. This is underlined by the poetry day and readings of Caribbean poetry in the original language by a native poet. There are examples of pupils doing GCSE in Chinese, Gaelic and some African languages.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

46. Overall the provision for the care of pupils in the school is good, however there are some aspects that are unsatisfactory. All members of staff show concern for the well-being of pupils, the quality of information kept on each pupil is detailed and members of staff know pupils and their medical and personal needs well. The school is supported very well by health professionals and by members of other agencies.
47. A number of health and safety hazards has been identified by the school but there is not a sufficiently rigorous approach across the school to ensuring that health and safety risks are assessed or that hazards, once identified, are eliminated. In some subjects and certain whole school aspects, risk assessments are not regularly undertaken. The school's health and safety policy has recently been re-written and approved by the governing body but has not yet been published in the staff handbook. The lack of a governors' premises committee, or any other frequent governor meeting, that could target health and safety management, contributes to the unsatisfactory situation. The headteacher and members of senior management take their responsibilities in this area seriously and report and analyse accidents and incidents. Tests of equipment and systems are made and documented and emergency procedures are practised. However, regular assessments of risk are not being made in some departments or in relation to the school's fire precaution arrangements, the handling of dangerous substances, the school's first aid provision or where significant risks might be present.

48. In science, risk assessments are made and members of staff are aware of the hazards involved and act appropriately. However, risk assessments are not being made to cover activities in art, design and technology or physical education. School trips are documented and approved by senior management, but are not supported by detailed risk assessments, nor are residential or more involved outings subject to detailed approval by the governing body.
49. Members of staff are trained to administer first aid and the school's procedures for the care and treatment of pupils are good. Appropriate records are kept regarding the care and medical needs of pupils. Thorough precautions are in place for dealing with emergencies arising from pupils' medical conditions and for dealing with accidents and injuries. The school nurse and other health professionals support the school well.
50. The school's arrangements for child protection are good. The policy and procedures follow the guidelines of the local committee for the protection of children. The deputy headteacher is designated as the person responsible for child protection and co-ordinates very well with the external agencies involved in this sensitive aspect of the school's work. The school monitors pupils very well, especially those pupils cared for by the authorities as well as those children whose welfare is causing concern.
51. The monitoring of pupils' academic performance and personal development are good. There are good procedures for assessing and recording pupils' attainment in the school, which shows an improvement since the last inspection. The school collects extensive data on pupil performance at entry and supports the lowest attainers with "catch-up" programmes in English and mathematics. However, the school does not analyse the performance data fully for gender or ethnicity. Target minimum grades for all subjects are set for each pupil, based on their previous Key Stage results in the core subjects. Progress towards these target grades is monitored through a well organised half-termly "grid grade" system in terms of National Curriculum or GCSE levels in all subjects. For this purpose the National Curriculum levels are divided into three tiers in the school's system. This is easy to understand and also helps to maintain the feeling of continuous learning and improvement. The grid grading process occurs in different weeks for different year groups, so as to spread the staff workload evenly.
52. From these grades the year teams identify pupils who are underachieving in several subject areas and review meetings are arranged, to support them and set them targets for immediate improvement. The school could usefully take advantage of this system to address and enhance the performance of those girls whose lower attainment on entry, it feels, leads to underachievement in national tests and examinations.
53. Assessments are not being used across the subjects consistently to guide ongoing curriculum planning and teaching strategies. Although some subjects, for instance history and English, are marking substantial pieces of work to national levels or GCSE grades this is not yet a feature of all subjects' teaching and marking. Pupils are becoming more informed about their own levels of performance, from the use of the grid grades, but in most subjects they are not receiving sufficient individual advice on what skills and knowledge these levels indicate and how they might improve their work to reach these levels. There is insufficient self-assessment and action planning towards these short-term targets. There is some good practice in the school; examples of the ways in which the national curriculum levels link with various kinds of pupils' written work are displayed in a history classroom. However, this practice needs to be developed more widely across the subjects. This will help subject teachers to set pupils meaningful individual targets for improvement, which can be monitored until they

are achieved. The school's policies relating to assessment and marking now need updating, to take account of the new approaches.

54. Pupils with special educational needs have a range of specific targets set each term in their Individual Education Plans. Some of the targets apply across their subjects whilst there is also a separate target in each individual subject. This practice works well. The statements of special educational need are reviewed regularly with parents and advice is sought from other professionals. Pupils are expected to attend their review meeting. The provision outlined on the statements is implemented by the school and effective use is made of support staff. However, understaffing of the speech and language therapy service has reduced the advice offered to pupils with statements of specific language needs. There are good links with external agencies, such as the special needs adviser and educational psychologist.
55. A range of good quality data is gathered when pupils enter the school so that those with special educational needs can be identified, suitable targets set and programmes implemented. There is a clear mechanism for the identification of pupils with special educational needs after they have entered the school.
56. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good. The teachers and support staff have good knowledge of pupils' needs and work hard to improve pupils' personal development. Much management and staff effort has been put into helping pupils improve their self-esteem, with personal development, study skills and additional access to the curriculum. These schemes are inclusive and have successfully encouraged pupils to attend and remain in school. The help provided for pupils by the counsellor and the chaplaincy team is also supporting this aspect of the school's work well.
57. Pupils join in a range of events in the school that contribute to their personal development including attending team-building in Year 7, leadership courses for prefects in Year 10, raising money for charities, visits and extra-curricular activities. There are many opportunities for pupils to develop independence and to use their initiative to undertake research and additional study in curriculum subjects and by joining many of the extra curricular activities available to them. These include adventure visits, an Outward Bound scheme, the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme, the Youth Club and by taking up duties in the school as prefects.
58. The school's ethos, the consistent use of behaviour strategies and good monitoring and supervision by the majority of the staff, support the good behaviour seen in the school. In lessons where behaviour of pupils has not been as good, teachers do not always consistently apply the school's policies. The school has good procedures in place for encouraging good behaviour, with staff able to use a range of appropriate rewards or sanctions. Assemblies, class activities and tutorial time are also used to reinforce good behaviour. There is a range of rewards, including certificates and merits used to praise and encourage.
59. The school makes good use of the unique "pupil journal" issued to each pupil. This document is central to pupils' life in school. It includes prayers, liturgy, instructions for them, a code of conduct, rules on appearance and uniform requirements and a copy of the home-school agreement. Lists of awards and details of all events affecting the pupil's day are entered in this book. When late, the pupil's book is stamped, when punished or praised, the details are entered by the member of staff involved. It has a useful section in which pupils record their target minimum grades and the grid grades that they gain as they move towards their targets. However, there is no space for them

to note any individual subject targets that should emerge from reports or self-assessments or diagnostic marking.

60. The school is very good at monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour and parents and carers confirm that their children feel safe in the school. Parents also confirm that there are few incidents of bullying or racism and that the school deals with any issues speedily and sensitively.
61. The monitoring of attendance and punctuality is very good, with the school operating both manual registers and automated systems very well. The school invests a significant amount of time in this system and in making calls home. The school calls home on the first day of any unreported absence and follows up with subsequent calls and letters. As a result, the school communicates very well with parents on arrangements for absences and timekeeping. The school monitors lateness very effectively and as a result of this effort, plus pupil incentives, lateness is reducing.
62. The educational welfare officer is supporting the school well in its endeavours to maintain and improve attendance levels. There are pupil incentives in place to further improve pupils' attendance and punctuality.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

63. Parents' views of the school are good, reflecting the previous inspection. The school has established good links with parents and provides good information for them. The effect of parents' involvement on the work of the school is satisfactory and their contribution to pupils' learning at school and at home is good.
64. Parents who attended the meeting with inspectors were positive about the school and surveys undertaken by the school suggest high levels of satisfaction. In their questionnaires the majority of parents confirmed that the school works closely with them. The school confirms that parents support school events well and that there is a high take up at curriculum meetings and other school events. Parents appreciate the accessibility of the tutorial staff. Parents are invited to Mass held at school and performances, concerts, careers and curriculum events held throughout the year.
65. Since the last inspection, the school has improved the quality of its information to parents and provision in this area is now good, although the school does not make arrangements for the provision of information in a parent's mother tongue where this is not English. The school's prospectus and annual report from the governors do not satisfy all the legal requirements.
66. Annual reports now contain helpful information about each subject and convey a clear picture of the individual pupil's progress, including their attendance, effort in the subject and specific skills that they have gained. The tutor reports are sensitively written and subject reports show a clear comparison between the school's target minimum grade for the pupil in that subject and the current grade they are achieving at the time of the report. They indicate up to three targets for improvement in the subject, although there is some inconsistency in the quality of these targets across departments. The school also sends home details of the pupil's 'grid grade' performances each half term with an accompanying explanatory letter, which keeps parents well informed throughout the year.
67. Parents spoken to during the inspection indicated their view that the school communicates as well as it can and that the information they receive is good. In their

questionnaires, parents indicate that they are well informed about the curriculum and the progress their children are making. An important and successful element of the school's communication system is the provision of "journals" to each pupil. These books are full of information about the school, are inspected and signed by parents, can be used to communicate with school and are greatly appreciated by parents.

68. Parents are involved with the school Parent Teacher Association in organising social and fund raising events. Parents are involved in the life of the school as governors, employees and by helping with extra-curricular activities and supporting pupils' work experience.
69. Parents feel that the transition from primary school is handled very well and that pupils settle quickly into their new school. Parents feel comfortable visiting school; they appreciate the warm welcome and professional manner with which their enquiries are handled by the school.
70. Special needs staff have close links with parents and all parents of pupils' with statements attend their child's annual review.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

71. The headteacher and the school's leadership group manage the school well. They have maintained all the many positive aspects identified at the time of the last inspection and have worked in a purposeful and determined way to create a strong sense of loyalty across the school. The headteacher, appointed in September 2001, has a vision for what could be achieved by the school in the next three years. This includes the creation of a "high achieving inner-city school where poverty and deprivation are not an excuse for underachievement"; raising the number of pupils gaining five or more A*-C GCSE results to 60 per cent and attracting as wide a range of resources as possible to support this vision. However, this long-term vision for the school is not adequately shared or specifically planned for, as the current school improvement plan only addresses priorities year by year.
72. The headteacher has introduced a number of very positive and effective improvements to the school since his appointment to support the raising of standards. These include changing the school timetable, broadening the range of subjects offered in Years 10 and 11, the introduction of a whole school academic monitoring system ('grid grades') and attracting additional income to the school to improve both the environment and the range of learning resources available for pupils and teachers to use. Under his leadership the school has gained Business and Enterprise College status, Training School status and is currently finalising its application for the Investors in People award. The school is now in a strong position to build upon its present strengths.
73. The leadership group has been extended and strengthened over the last five terms with the appointment of three assistant headteachers, one having specific responsibility for teaching and learning. However, the balance of duties and responsibilities within the leadership group as a whole are uneven with the responsibility for driving through some major initiatives resting with two or three individuals. As a result, not all members of the group fully understand the rationale behind specific initiatives or the action they need to take to ensure they become fully embedded in the work of the school.
74. Further improvements in the school are impeded by inconsistencies in the interpretation and implementation of school policies and practices. This was an issue raised at the time of the last inspection. In some areas this is very good, particularly in

history and modern foreign language. In other areas, specifically mathematics, science, art, physical education, music and English as an additional language, practice is variable but, overall, just satisfactory. The staff handbook is not helpful in ensuring that all staff are familiar with the school's key policies and procedures, or with roles and responsibilities of key staff. It is poorly organised and has important omissions.

75. The school's mission statement is well articulated in the school prospectus and within its equal opportunities policy. This statement places significant emphasis on pupils' personal and spiritual development. The ethos of the school positively reflects these values and aspirations in its day-to-day work. However, this statement does not place sufficient emphasis on pupils' academic development.
76. Governors understand the school's priorities and are regularly involved in various aspects of school life. They have a clear view of the positive changes introduced by the headteacher since his appointment and are very supportive of his style of leadership and management. Recent training has helped them to recognise the areas of school management which are their responsibility and which are his but they are not yet fully involved in the long term planning. As a result they are less effective in determining the future direction of the school and the setting of priorities. There is a tradition within the school for heads of department to attend full governing body meetings to discuss their curriculum areas. However, these presentations do not occur on a sufficiently regular basis or follow a set pattern to provide governors with the level of detail they need to develop in their role as critical friends and ensure they are meeting their statutory requirements. These issues were raised at the time of the last inspection. The way in which governors do aspects of their business lacks some rigour. Their annual report to parents does not satisfy all statutory requirements and has not included accounts of the school's improvement since the last inspection. Their committee meetings are not minuted. There is no systematic process for reviewing the range of policies they have adopted over time. Some lack of clarity results and this can lead to the inconsistent application of policies among staff. In particular, governors have not been sufficiently rigorous in relation to health and safety where practices are unsatisfactory, leading in one instance to a significant hazard not being addressed over a long period.
77. The effectiveness of staff with leadership responsibilities is satisfactory overall, but varies from excellent to satisfactory. Leadership and management are excellent in history and particularly effective in modern foreign languages. Special educational needs is led by an experienced and able co-ordinator, who manages the learning support team well. She has a clear vision of the direction the department should take in the future and has identified the steps needed. Leadership and management are more effective where there is greater co-ordination and consistency of approach in areas such as planning for improvement, assessment and monitoring of teachers' performance. The school has recently introduced a line management system whereby members of the school's leadership group, including the headteacher, are linked to subject areas. Currently no specific job descriptions relating to this role are published and there is a lack of consistency in the way in which the work of all departments is monitored. As a result there is no effective system in place to identify and share good practice throughout the school. These issues were raised at the time of the last inspection.
78. Some staff with leadership responsibilities are aware of the priorities identified within the current school improvement plan. However, timescales and success criteria are not sharp enough to enable the school to effectively monitor and evaluate its progress in meeting priorities. Change in the last two years has been rapid and has addressed

many issues. This has resulted in some lack of clarity and limited understanding of priorities by some staff. The links between this plan and the school's financial planning are not clear, particularly since the sources of finance for each costed action in the plan are not identified. However, the headteacher has been effectively resourceful in attracting additional funding sources to the school. These have enabled a number of key developments to proceed, including the equipping of the school with a high ratio of computers to pupils. The school's next three year improvement plan is nearing completion. It focuses on far fewer priorities and provides a much better opportunity to link these with financial planning.

79. The administrative and support staff have a range of skills that provide an effective support system for the headteacher, teaching staff, pupils and visitors. They work well as a team and make an effective contribution to the day-to-day management systems operating within the school. The school has made considerable progress in its use of ICT in support of management and administration. After some major difficulties with financial management, which led to a critical auditor's report, effective computerised budget monitoring systems are now ready to activate. A number of recommendations for action have been made in a further, recent, auditor's report and these will need to be addressed systematically. Computer technology is now being used effectively to track performance data for each pupil, to relate these to other pupil-specific data. From this analysis, targets are being generated for each pupil's future performance (known as target minimum grades) and pupils in need of additional support are identified. This system is developing well and, as more staff become familiar with its potential, it will have a significant effect, although this is currently limited.
80. The match of the staff to the needs of the curriculum is satisfactory overall. There has been a high rate of teaching staff turnover during the last two years, with more than half having been appointed during that time. There is a clear recognition by the new headteacher of the need to recruit high quality staff. However there are still staffing issues in mathematics, science, physical education and design technology. The teaching assistants have a wide range of experience and undergo further training as their needs are identified. They are effective when supporting pupils in class. Although the numbers of support staff have increased since the last inspection, there are still insufficient numbers to provide consistency of support throughout the school. Additionally, there is no clear guidance about how support should be used in classrooms and this has led to some variability. Information provided to teaching staff about pupils with special educational needs is comprehensive and useful and this is an improvement since the last inspection.
81. Teachers and other staff undertake a professional development programme which is closely linked to the priorities identified in the school development plan. The focus for the current year was to provide training for middle managers, many of whom are recent appointments. The Performance Management Policy is now fully in place with appropriate targets set for all staff. However the procedures for the induction of new staff are less satisfactory and the school needs to develop an appropriate induction programme together with an induction handbook.
82. The school occupies a small site and efficient use is made of the limited space available. There is a good deal of congestion at the changeover of lessons despite the presence of staff in the corridors. The play areas are also too small for the number of pupils wishing to use them. The school is kept clean and there are attractive display areas that are used for information and to celebrate the achievements and cultures of the children.

83. There has been a systematic programme of refurbishment introduced by the new headteacher, aimed at improving the working environment. A new reception area and a waiting area for parents have been built, together with two new science laboratories and two mobile classrooms located in the playground area. A new extension for business education is planned for the near future.
84. Accommodation is good in mathematics, science, geography, history, music and ICT. However there are health and safety issues in the resistant materials workshop of design technology, a lack of facilities for drama and inadequate space for careers education. Provision for outdoor activities in physical education is also very limited as the distance to the nearest playing fields at Southwark Park is too great for the site to be used for normal lessons. There are plans to build a new sports hall on the existing site together with a refurbishment programme for the changing rooms. The school makes good use of its residential centre in Hampshire where opportunities exist for both outdoor education activities and field studies.
85. The quality of learning resources is good overall although provision does vary between departments. Resources are good in the core subjects and also in languages, geography, history, ICT and the special educational needs department. They are unsatisfactory in music where there is a lack of appropriate classroom instruments. The ratio of computers to pupils is double the national average and there is good access to computer facilities in most subject areas and in the special educational needs room.
86. Library provision is good. It is open to the pupils at breaktimes and lunchtimes and also before and after school. A new librarian has recently been appointed and the targets for the coming year are to increase the allocation of fiction books for all year groups, fully computerise the library system to aid pupil use and develop a cinema club to link in with the new GCSE Media Studies course which will start in September.
87. Given the challenging context of the school and the community it serves and its overall effectiveness, it is judged to be providing good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

88. There have been a number of important improvements in the school since the last inspection and other areas where improvement is still needed. In order to fully secure the improvements already made and to ensure the school continues on its path of determined further improvement, the headteacher and governors should:

(1) continue to develop the effectiveness of subject leadership and teaching where weaknesses are leading to pupils underachieving, particularly in mathematics and science, drawing on the very good practice already developed in other subjects. (paragraphs 19-23, 74, 77, 110, 121, 122, 129, 130, 168, 172, 174, 184, 189 and 190)

(2) ensure that the strategy for securing the further improvement of the school over the next three years, based on the headteacher's very clear vision, is fully embedded by:

- publishing longer term objectives for the school, shared and understood by staff, governors and parents, which include a wider emphasis on academic achievement;
- planning strategies that will enable those objectives to be met;
- ensuring objectives and priorities are supported by a clear set of actions, timescales and resources;
- Ensuring that policies are systematically reviewed and presented to staff in a coherent way.

(paragraphs 71-75 and 78)

(3) Continue to develop the analysis and use of pupil data by:

- giving consistently effective feedback to all pupils to ensure they know how to improve their work;
- identifying how teaching and the curriculum can be adapted to benefit pupils at risk of under-achieving, including through 'catch-up' programmes;
- evaluating the effect of strategies developed.

(paragraph 79, 136, 160 and 167)

(4) build on the developments in Years 9 to 11 to ensure that all pupils in Years 10 and 11 follow a coherent course in ICT.

(paragraphs 36 and 179)

(5) further improve governors' procedures, including those for ensuring the effective monitoring of the school's development and for securing a safe school environment.

(paragraphs 20, 47, 48, 76, 84 and 161)

Other areas for improvement which should be considered by the school:

- Ensure that subject teachers use the targets and strategies on individual education plans to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs.
- Provide guidelines for the working together of teachers and special educational needs support staff in the classroom to improve their effectiveness.
- Improve the monitoring of the progress across the school of pupils for whom English is an additional language.
- Improve pupils' access to ICT across the curriculum.
- Review the time allocations to subjects within the curriculum for 11 to 14 year olds to ensure adequate experience of creative and performing arts.

OTHER FEATURES OF THE SCHOOL SPECIFIED FOR INSPECTION

Provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language

89. There are 203 pupils in the school who are bilingual, although only eight of them are in the very early stages of English language acquisition.
90. Overall the progress made by pupils with English as an additional language, aged 11 to 16, is at least satisfactory. Good progress is made in English, design and technology and modern foreign languages, and very good progress in history. The rates of progress made by these pupils across the curriculum are similar to those by their peers for whom English is a first language. Bilingual pupils share the general enjoyment of school life and positive attitudes demonstrated by pupils in general. This contributes to the quality of their achievement. Bilingual pupils find the school environment supportive. They engage with the curriculum and most can contribute confidently. Pupils in the early stages of language acquisition have only a basic level of grammatical control and need help to complete exercises. Those at and above Stage 3 of the language acquisition understand the aims of their lessons and make use of a range of idioms, structures and vocabulary. Their aural comprehension and oral production are of an appropriate standard to allow them to express intelligent views, and to move from social interactions to the formal language required for different tasks and audiences.
91. Although progress has been made in the provision for bilingual pupils since the last inspection, particularly since the appointment of a qualified co-ordinator in September 2001, important aspects of this specialist area require development. Induction arrangements involve some limited withdrawal work for pupils who have recently arrived in the country and who therefore require focused support. However, the overall deployment of support is necessarily limited as there are no specialist teachers of English as an additional language in the school and the co-ordinator also manages the provision for pupils with special educational needs across the school.
92. Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is loosely coordinated across the curriculum. Although some liaison takes place between the co-ordinator and the English department, communication with other subject areas is unsystematic and there are inconsistencies in the approach of the different departments to the needs of these pupils. The lack of centralisation means that it is unclear to the coordinator how the heads of department monitor progress, and in what way they provide for the requirements of bilingual pupils, for example whether they offer models of the style of writing they expect and key vocabulary. In general, teachers can identify pupils with English as an additional language but they are not always planned for in lessons. Thus opportunities may be lost for pupils to specifically use and extend their knowledge of English. Although, heads of department have a general appreciation of how well these pupils achieve, they do not conduct detailed analyses of their results. There is significant scope for the further promotion and celebration of the attainment of these pupils.
93. Overall, management could be more closely directed towards monitoring, evaluating and improving the performance of bilingual pupils. The co-ordinator recognises the need for tighter tracking of pupil progress and for more detailed profiles, showing pupils' developing language competence, to be shared with staff and pupils. There is room for these pupils, and especially advanced learners, to be made more aware of their own linguistic strengths and weaknesses. For the future, the co-ordinator intends to see that more pupils have pre-arranged opportunities to reflect on their own goals and progress

in English. There are proposals to set measurable targets in language proficiency and to formalise and broaden the feedback to pupils. This will be achieved by extending the annual audit to include learners who are beyond Stage 3 of language acquisition and allocating time - in addition to that used at the annual parents' meeting - for individual feedback to pupils.

94. There is also scope for improved levels of support and feedback in pupil assessment. Routine marking rarely draws attention to aspects of English and shows insufficient correction of second language errors, such as correct tense, preposition and article usage. Most teachers have received very little training in the development of strategies to support pupils with English as an additional language in class and some do not yet recognise the need for more advanced learners of English to receive continuing support.
95. The co-ordinator's materials are clear and provide an overview of the school's objectives for these pupils. However, there are significant omissions, such as procedures for late arriving bilingual pupils. Overall, there is a need to broaden the scope of information reaching teachers about these pupils and to incorporate further strategies for teaching bilingual pupils. There is also scope for maximising the bilingual skills of teachers from other departments in the school, especially to help pupils settle in and understand what is going on around them. The teaching resources held by the co-ordinator are good and can be accessed by pupils for independent use. The co-ordinator has set up an after-school language club, but this currently attracts only a very small number of pupils.

The effectiveness of the school's links with the community

96. The school's links with the community are very good and a strength of the school. This aspect is continuing to develop further due to new and imaginative initiatives being pursued by the senior management team. Stemming from the school's Beacon Status and continuing with its bid for Business and Enterprise College status, the school has made many productive contacts with outside agencies in the community and the world of business. The school has established several links with providers of pastoral and social support who have helped the school and individual pupils.
97. The Church supports the school very well in its planned liturgical activities, providing chaplaincy support, advice and help from the diocese. Members of the Church support the school in the organisation of retreats for pupils.
98. Pupils in Year 10 benefit from a programme of work experience that is organised using a service provider and pupils greatly benefit from spending two weeks with a wide range of organisations that include local businesses, schools and hospitals. The school also has links with organisations that allow pupils to attend extended work experience placements.
99. Liaison with Southwark Business Alliance, who support work experience co-ordinators, has provided the opportunity for a group of pupils to explore employment opportunities and modern apprenticeships within the local authority as well as extended work experience placements for a number of year eleven pupils. Links with business will be strengthened later this term when all members of the teaching staff go out of school to work in business for a day.

100. The school enjoys strong links with the careers service provider and with various departments of the local education authority including the educational welfare service and with the local social services. The school has formed productive links with the Greater London Authority, the local borough and the local representatives of the Metropolitan Police.
101. The school uses the local community well by making visits that enrich the curriculum and welcoming into school a wide range of visitors including theatre groups, representatives of business and industry, the Church and members of the Jewish faith.
102. Links with partner institutions are very good. The school has very good, evolving relationships with seven primary schools, five secondary schools, four sixth form and technical colleges, a medical school and a number of universities. These partnerships have been strengthened by the school's beacon status and are being further enhanced by the bid for Business and Enterprise college status.
103. The school has very strong relationships with its feeder primary schools. Pupils and parents agree that the pupils' transitions into the school are handled very well. The school organises a summer school for a week with activities planned to give Year 7 pupils a smooth and productive start in school. Visits are made to the school before transfer and members of staff visit most feeder schools. Parents of pupils with special educational needs and those children with English as an additional language confirm that liaison with the feeder primary schools is effective.
104. The links with the secondary schools have included joint initiatives in training, revision courses for pupils, developing an extra-net link, teacher training workshops and a conference. The senior management teams from this and another school have worked together to provide mutual support. Middle management training courses have been run jointly with other secondary schools.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	128
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	89

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	4	24	51	41	5	1	1
Percentage	3	19	40	32	4	1	1

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	613
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	301

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	22
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	126

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	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.8
National comparative data	7.8

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	1.2

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	68	51	119

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	44	42	42
	Girls	35	26	22
	Total	79	68	64
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	66 (77)	57 (61)	54 (49)
	National	66 (64)	67 (66)	66 (66)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	31 (40)	30 (30)	12 (11)
	National	32 (31)	45 (43)	33 (34)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	31	43	42
	Girls	25	31	27
	Total	56	74	69
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	47 (75)	62 (56)	58 (54)
	National	67 (65)	70 (68)	67 (64)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	10 (39)	29 (28)	23 (11)
	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	60	48	108

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	28	55	58
	Girls	14	48	49
	Total	42	103	107
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	39 (43)	95 (96)	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	36.4
	National	39.8

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – Indian
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
282	6	0
69	1	0
72	0	0
26	6	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
9	0	0
29	1	0
123	6	1
0	1	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	42.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	14.5

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	19
Total aggregate hours worked per week	332

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	73.0
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 2	N/a
Key Stage 3	25
Key Stage 4	25

Financial information

Financial year	2002-2003
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	£
Total income	2,395,804
Total expenditure	2,331,394
Expenditure per pupil	3,803
Balance brought forward from previous year	103,447
Balance carried forward to next year	167,857

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	19
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	25

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	2
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	613
Number of questionnaires returned	172

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	53	41	3	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	51	42	4	2	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	44	45	6	1	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	41	46	9	2	2
The teaching is good.	45	46	6	2	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	45	41	9	5	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	51	38	5	4	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	72	25	3	1	0
The school works closely with parents.	43	42	8	5	1
The school is well led and managed.	46	43	6	2	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	51	38	6	3	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	32	46	11	4	7

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

ENGLISH

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

Strengths

- Teaching and learning is consistently good in both key stages.
- Leadership and management are good.
- Assessment is good and leaves pupils in no doubt as to what they must do to improve their grades.
- All pupils are entered for GCSE in English literature in addition to English.
- Additional lessons are provided for pupils to prepare for examinations and otherwise improve their work.

Areas for improvement

- The performance of girls, particularly in Years 10 and 11.
- The use of information communication technology to enrich learning in the subject.

105. Pupils achieve well in English and by the end of Year 9, pupils' attainment reaches the standard expected nationally. Pupils listen carefully to the teacher and each other. Their capacity for oral collaboration is particularly effective in drama lessons where pupils plan and rehearse their work in pairs and small groups. A high proportion of them speak out confidently in class to answer questions or give an opinion. Pupils enjoy a range of demanding texts and tackle Shakespeare with confidence and success. Higher attaining pupils understand poetry and prose in ways beyond the literal. They recognise elements of fable, satire and allegory in the opening chapters of *Animal Farm*, for example, and hypothesise about outcomes. All pupils, including those of average and low attainment, identify implicit and explicit meaning and differentiate between the two. Pupils are generally able to pay the close attention to text required for successful literary criticism. Annotation is a strong feature of attainment. The writing of higher achieving pupils is of good length, properly spelled and punctuated, appropriate to purpose and substantially correct. Although average and low attainers make mistakes in punctuation, spelling and grammar, pupils redraft their work carefully and this improves standards. Writing is well presented, although pupils make too little use of information and communication technology to draft and present their work.

106. By the end of Year 11, pupils' attainment in English and English literature is broadly in line with the national average. They continue to collaborate well orally, and this helps their learning. They present the results of their discussions to the class confidently. Pupils realise that they must vary their style of speech to suit the occasion and the person they are addressing. Higher achieving pupils address formal meetings such as school assembly with confidence. Pupils have a good technical vocabulary. In their study of the poem *First Love* by John Clare, they readily identify and compare the heated language of lust with the cold language of rejection and these with the romantic language of love. They identify metaphor, simile and oxymoron and perceive the effectiveness of the use of emphasis, echo, rhyme, rhythm and alliteration. Close reading, annotation and writing of literary criticism are key strengths of their attainment.

107. When pupils enter the school, their attainment in English is below the national average. The boys are better than the girls. Results in the 2002 national tests for pupils in Year 9 were broadly in line with the national average. In comparison with similar schools, the results were well above average. Boys continue to do better than girls although the gap is becoming less marked. The upward trend of pupils' attainment in English is broadly in line with that seen nationally.
108. It is a strength of the department that almost all pupils in Year 11 are entered for GCSE examinations in English literature in addition to English. In 2002 the proportion of all pupils achieving grades A to C and A to G in both examinations was broadly in line with the national average, although no pupil achieved an A * grade. Pupils do better in this subject than many of the other academic subjects, although the performance of girls is significantly below the national average particularly in English literature grade A* to C.
109. Pupils are well taught at both key stages. The teachers have particularly good knowledge of their subject and the requirements of the external examinations, with the result that pupils are well prepared for them. Lessons are well-planned, resources are suitable and classes are well managed. Pupils learn well in pairs, small groups and sets. They behave well, show interest, and delight in responding orally to the teachers' skilful questioning. In the best lessons, concentration is intense and extended independent learning is a strong feature of pupils' attainment
110. Leadership and management of English are good. The newly appointed head of department is strongly committed to improving standards. Teaching is monitored and this practice is to be extended to further improve teaching. Revision classes have been instituted so that pupils who have poor attainment on entry now have extra lessons to improve their levels. Extra curricular activities such as visits to Shakespeare's Globe Theatre are now being developed to further enrich pupils' learning.
111. Pupils' spiritual and cultural development is well planned and served by the extended choice of worthwhile literature which is presented to pupils. They have good opportunities for exploring the moral dimension in class discussion and discursive essays. Social development is well served by the department in its systematic and effective development of oral and written language
112. Since the last inspection there has been a satisfactory level of improvement. Pupils' performance in the national tests in Year 9, however, has declined and is no longer above the national average except when pupils' performance is compared with other schools in similar socio-economic circumstances. GCSE results in English literature have improved and the GCSE results of both examinations are now both in line with the national average. Girls' results are now significantly lower than boys, a reversal of the previous situation. Teaching and learning are now consistently good. Pupils continue to enjoy the lessons. Extra-curricular activities, however, continue to be underdeveloped. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language now receive a good level of support and make the same good progress as the rest. The department now supports pupils' understanding of the riches of their own cultural diversity in its choice of the literature which it presents to all pupils.

Drama

113. In 2002, GCSE results for the small number of candidates were well below the standards expected nationally. Results look set to improve this year. By the end of Year 9, pupils reach average standards. They collaborate effectively to plan, rehearse and perform their work. They use devices such as freeze-frame and thought-tracking to mark significant moments in their drama as they experiment with the visual and symbolic representations of power and fear. In Years 10 and 11, pupils reach an average level of attainment, working effectively in a variety of groupings to explore the pressure of fame, for example. They are increasing their capacity to evaluate their own work and that of others.
114. Teaching is good at both key stages. The lessons have very clear aims which the teacher shares with the class. The curriculum is firmly based on skills necessary for improvisation and performance and the good knowledge of the teacher enables pupils to learn them well. Lesson planning is consistently good and the teacher promotes key concepts and vocabulary well. Pupils' attitude to their learning is good. The subject interests and motivates them. Their independent learning is a striking feature with the teacher needing to make minimal intervention.
115. Leadership and management are good, the newly appointed head of subject having rapidly evaluated what needs to be improved with the result that pupils' standards are already being raised. Drama was not considered in the last inspection so it is not possible to indicate how it has improved since then.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- Staff have a strong commitment to raising pupils' achievement.
- Most pupils have a positive attitude to mathematics and behave well.
- The provision of extra-curricular activities is good.

Areas for improvement

- Attainment in tests at the end of Year 9 and in the GCSE examination.
- The sharing of good practice in teaching and learning.
- The full implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy.

116. Results in the 2002 National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 were well below the national average. Although results were below the average for schools with pupils of similar prior attainment they were well above the average for schools with pupils in a similar socio-economic situation. Pupils' mathematics test results were below those in English but similar to those in science. Boys achieved slightly better results than girls.
117. The percentage of pupils attaining grades A*-C in the 2002 GCSE examination was well below the national average. Pupils' GCSE mathematics results were, on average, slightly below those in their other subjects. Boys' GCSE mathematics results were much better than girls but boys performed even better in their other subjects than girls.
118. When they enter the school, pupils' standards in mathematics are below average. They achieve satisfactorily so that by the end of Year 9 their attainment remains below average overall. Pupils with English as an additional language achieve similar

standards to other pupils. More able pupils can manipulate simple algebraic expressions, determine interior and exterior angles of various shapes and draw a cumulative frequency graph. Some lack the initiative to interpret a question that requires them to devise a tally chart for themselves. Middle ability pupils find perimeters of shapes in algebraic form and complete a scatter graph. Lower ability pupils know how to calculate the mean of a set of numbers but make frequent errors in their calculations, both mentally and when using a calculator.

119. Due to study leave, few Year 11 pupils were present during the inspection, and their work was not available, so that it is not possible to evaluate their attainment. By the end of Year 10 attainment is below average overall. More able pupils complete tables of values for quadratic graphs and then draw them. They find the radius of a circle given the area and use a tree diagram to determine probabilities. Some pupils lack assurance when simplifying algebraic expressions, for example involving brackets and minus signs. Middle ability pupils add and subtract fractions and find the n th term of a sequence. They do not readily recall the decimal form of simple fractions. Although they can complete a table of values for a cumulative frequency graph some do not choose a suitable scale to draw it. Lower ability pupils add like terms in algebra and find angles in a quadrilateral. Some confuse odd and prime numbers and others struggle to interpret a scatter graph.
120. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good, or very good, in most lessons. They are positive about the subject, contribute to class discussions readily and relationships are good. In a few lessons, because of weaknesses in the teaching pupils behave unsatisfactorily, show limited interest and have little motivation.
121. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The best lessons occur where the teacher has secure subject knowledge, involves pupils effectively through questions and discussion and manages pupils' behaviour firmly and fairly. For example, during a whole class discussion in a Year 8 lesson on brackets in algebra the teacher adroitly used a method suggested by a pupil to illustrate a short cut approach to calculating 7×49 mentally. The department is beginning to make effective use of ideas from the National Numeracy Strategy. In a well-taught Year 7 lesson on averages the teacher encouraged pupils to show their answers on personal whiteboards and was able to check what pupils knew, understood and could do at each stage thereby enhancing their learning. The use of plenary sessions, to review what has been learnt, is under-developed. Although teachers' planning is satisfactory overall issues arise in a few cases that show that insufficient thought has been given to linking the methods that should flow through the lesson. Some teaching lacks the practical or investigative flavour to engage and interest pupils sufficiently. Although teachers manage pupils' behaviour effectively in most cases, there are weaknesses in others. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well when a support assistant is available to give individual help. Those with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress. Overall, the subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development.
122. Leadership and management are satisfactory and improving. The acting head of department is enthusiastic and has made a good start to raising standards. Staff commitment to providing extra-curricular activities is good. There needs to be a clear delegation of responsibilities so that vital issues are tackled quickly. The implementation of the Key Stage 3 Numeracy Strategy is incomplete. Although the cross-curricular initiative is under way, there is neither a 'catch-up' course for lower attainers as they enter the school, nor full realisation by staff of the need to introduce more practical approaches to teaching and learning. A more sustained programme to

monitor, evaluate and develop teaching is required, including sharing good practice. The department is starting to make effective use of ICT but has the resources for much more. There has only been satisfactory progress in recent months on issues raised in the previous inspection report.

SCIENCE

Overall, provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Lessons are generally well structured with effective management of pupils, a variety of teaching approaches and good subject knowledge.
- Schemes of work include examples of literacy, numeracy and ICT activities.
- The use of pupil test record cards, topic target sheets and pupil self assessment sheets are helping to identify pupil progress in the subject.
- Strong support from an experienced laboratory technician.

Areas for improvement

- More emphasis is needed on visual aids to enhance understanding in lessons.
- Schemes of work require further development.
- Diagnostic marking needs to become more consistent using National Curriculum levels and GCSE grades.
- More assessments should be carried out to check pupil performance in Scientific Enquiry
- The monitoring of pupils' progress and the setting of short-term targets.

123. On entry to the school, pupils' attainment is generally well below national expectations in this subject. Attainment of pupils in Year 9 tests in 2002 is also well below national expectations but well above average for schools of a similar free school meal intake. Results have gradually improved since 2000, although they are behind the other two core subjects in the school. The proportion who gained level 6 or higher in Year 9 is well below the national averages but in line with results for similar schools, although lower than the other core subjects in this school. Extra time has been spent on booster classes and revision guides to try to improve this position.
124. At the end of Year 9 pupils are able to investigate how photosynthesis works in plants, to recognise the various forms of energy in our lives and find out about the range of metals found on Earth. More able pupils can explain key words and mechanisms in the subject without help. Less able pupils need more help in understanding scientific ideas and in completing the work on time.
125. Attainment in science in GCSE examinations in 2002 is also well below national averages, declining after a substantial improvement in 2001. Pupils performed poorly in 2002 when compared with other subjects in the school. Girls did significantly less well than boys and the department should evaluate the causes of this. The department has made use this year of a guidance document on raising attainment in science. Standards seen in lessons and during the scrutiny of Year 10 books indicate an improving situation with standards now slightly below national averages.
126. At the end of Year 11 more able pupils can show scientific skills in explaining how plants and animals adapt to their environment or in investigating the neutralisation of acids. They can use numerical skills to draw comparisons between the different planets in space and to calculate wavelengths of sound waves. Less able pupils can remember some of the key facts in the topics but find it more difficult to think out

answers for themselves. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress and good progress when support staff help them in lessons. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress; those in Years 10 and 11 make good progress.

127. Overall, the teaching in 93 per cent of the lessons seen was satisfactory or better. This shows an improvement on the previous inspection. The quality of teaching is generally good in lessons in Years 10 and 11. In Years 7 to 9 lessons it is satisfactory overall, with a wider range from very good to unsatisfactory.
128. Features of the good teaching include the heavy involvement of pupils in class discussion, which encourages them to play a full part; good subject knowledge with which teachers can ask probing questions and respond to any query; good lesson pace and classroom management, which help pupils to stay on task and meet their expectations, and the setting of appropriate homework to reinforce learning. Simple questions like "What does humidity mean?" are used to check basic understanding; and a variety of teaching approaches gives pupils more ways than one to learn in the subject. Some pupils in Years 10 and 11 are able to use their independent thinking in designing their own experiment on osmosis in potatoes. Another GCSE lesson offered pupils the chance to word-process their own personal health plans whilst in a different lesson pupils were able to use the new multimedia science package on computers to revise their understanding of the electromagnetic spectrum. Literacy skills were effectively used in a lesson where pupils planned and gave a short talk about the main features of human digestion. A practical lesson on reflection was well supported by the use of good ray diagrams on an overhead projector. A revision lesson on animal habitats and food chains used a group quiz activity to reinforce pupils' learning.
129. On some occasions a lack of visual stimuli reduces the extent of learning. For instance a class discussion involving key words and definitions needs, at the front of the class, some large cards showing the key words. This would help pupils, both with their understanding and in some cases their spelling of the words. Diagrams and tables also need to be used more widely to add an extra insight to learning for many pupils. Other features of less successful teaching seen include a lack of class control, so that pupils do not stay on task and a slower pace of working, particularly near the end of the lesson, so that the impact of the learning is reduced.
130. The marking of pupils' work is carried out regularly but is not consistent across the department in the depth of diagnostic comments on what the pupil needs to do to improve their level or grade. Substantial pieces of work are not yet marked in terms of a National Curriculum level or GCSE grade, although the end-of-unit tests in Years 7 to 9 do have levels attached to the scores.
131. Pupils with special educational needs sometimes make good progress in the subject when they are supported in a planned way by learning support staff. A few pupils with English as an additional language have risen to top sets in the subject. Others make satisfactory progress.
132. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons seen were generally good, sometimes very good, particularly in Years 10 and 11. Pupils work hard and co-operate, for instance, sharing ideas in a group discussion in one lesson and working together to set up apparatus in another. All lessons start with a prayer, sometimes offered by a pupil. This helps to create respect for others and a good atmosphere for learning. Overall, the subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development.

133. Some lower attaining Year 10 pupils are undertaking a GCSE in an associated vocational subject, Health and Social Care and this is proving effective in maintaining their interest in a scientific area of the curriculum.
134. Leadership and management of the department has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. The head of department is well supported in management activities by two other members of the department. Schemes of work include sections on using pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT and the department is making good use of the New Opportunities Fund training in using new computerised science programs and pupils are beginning to benefit from using the new software that has been purchased.
135. The schemes of work for the remaining modules of the GCSE Modular Double Science course need completion as soon as possible. Schemes of work and end-of-unit tests in Years 7 to 9 need to include more assessment opportunities for scientific enquiry and should also include links with the Key Ideas and Yearly Teaching Objectives of the national Key Stage 3 strategy for science. All schemes of work would benefit from including a wider range of teaching approaches, to cater more fully for both ends of the attainment spectrum. Homework provision has improved since the last inspection and the introduction of preset homework activities (started recently for Year 7) is to be applauded and should be developed for other year groups.
136. Assessment of pupils' progress has improved since the last inspection and the use of pupil record cards to link the unit tests with the grid grades and the target minimum grades is a good way forward for the department. Pupils now have topic target lists and self-assessment sheets in their books, which is beginning to increase their familiarity with assessment criteria. The department has not yet used the grading system to check for underachieving pupils in the subject and help them improve by setting suitable subject-based targets, linked to National Curriculum levels (or GCSE grades). Nor has it yet used assessment information to guide future curricular planning and teaching strategies.
137. The accommodation for science is spacious, including a new laboratory, and resources are well organised through an experienced and efficient laboratory technician. However, the white board in each classroom is too shiny for effective use with the overhead projector.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- Good teaching overall in Years 10 and 11.
- Good standards overall in Years 10 and 11.
- Good extra curricular provision.
- Strong emphasis on the development of drawing and painting.
- Good behaviour and positive attitudes.

Areas for improvement

- Pace and challenge in some classes.
- The range of teaching strategies.
- Consistency in the use of ICT.
- The effectiveness of the use of lesson reviews.

138. As all Year 11 pupils were on examination study leave, no classes were observed. Judgements are based on a thorough scrutiny of work provided for Years 10 and 11. By the end of Year 11 standards are good. GCSE results in 2002 exceeded national expectations for those achieving A*-C grades. The percentage of pupils gaining A*-G grades also exceeded national expectations. With one exception, this has been the trend in examination results in recent years.
139. Pupils make good progress in drawing and painting skills. Drawing techniques are used effectively in a variety of contexts and media. Painting techniques are also well learnt through good teaching. Much of the work seen is developed to good standards of artistic competency, including the effective use of relief and mixed media, resulting in some imaginative and well-finished outcomes. Sketchbooks showed that processes of research and experimentation are being well developed in Years 10 and 11. Pupils have a knowledge of various artists but this does not appear to be very influential in their work. There is also evidence of the influence of other cultures in some of the work on display and in the schemes of work, but this aspect could be developed more effectively. From work seen and from discussion with pupils, it is clear that throughout Years 10 and 11 pupils are encouraged and expected to develop effective skills as independent learners and to pursue individuality of response to a common theme. It was evident from work seen that pupils build on earlier knowledge and understanding of painting and drawing skills, extending the scale and quality of their finished work as the result of good teaching and high expectations. This was seen well in the range of imaginative and well considered approaches to portraiture and figurative work in Year 11. Pupils learn to communicate ideas in visual form using appropriate notes and sketches. They also acquire an awareness of their surroundings by drawing trips to the river and building three-dimensional structures based on local architecture.
140. Teacher assessments for Year 9 did not meet national expectations. Standards overall of work seen in classes are average. Pupils enter school with overall standards that are below national expectations. In this context, the progress that pupils make in most classes to raise their standards to where it is close to national expectations represents satisfactory achievement.
141. Overall, pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 are developing a satisfactory understanding of the basic elements of line, tone, texture and colour effectively in their work. Opportunities for imaginative work and art appreciation are limited. Homework is regularly set and marked but could be used more effectively to extend learning opportunities and to support work in class. There is insufficient exploration of other media and pupils do not learn enough of their own or other cultures through art.
142. The current carousel arrangement in Years 7, 8 and 9 disrupts continuity and progression of learning. This system will be discontinued from September when pupils will be timetabled for weekly lessons in art throughout the year. Progress in art for the majority of pupils is satisfactory, for many in Years 10 and 11 it is good. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an alternative language are well integrated and make satisfactory progress. The use of ICT needs further development as part of the taught courses for all.
143. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teaching overall in the lower years is satisfactory, sometimes good. Teaching overall in Years 10 and 11 is good. There is some unsatisfactory teaching in Years 9 and 10 where task, pace, teaching strategies and levels of expectation are not sufficiently challenging or varied.

144. Opportunities for reflection and the development of pupils' oracy skills could be used more consistently and effectively. Procedures for assessment are well established and regularly used to inform pupils of their standards. At all levels, many pupils enjoy art and respond favourably to work given. Behaviour and attitudes are generally good, sometimes very good. Overall, the subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development.
145. Management of the department is satisfactory. Schemes of work are in place for all year groups but are limited in the range of media on offer, and make no reference to the ways in which literacy, numeracy and citizenship can contribute to pupils' personal development. There is good extra curricular provision planned but no current development plan was available to shed light on the priorities identified as the focus for further improvements.
146. Whilst the department has worked hard and successfully to raise and maintain standards achieved in the GCSE examination, overall improvement since the last report is unsatisfactory. Pupil achievement is celebrated by attractive displays of work in the art room and the public areas of the school.

BUSINESS STUDIES AND ECONOMICS

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

Strengths

- Teaching and learning are good so that pupils achieve well.
- The school gives a high priority and status to both subjects.

Areas for improvement

- Increasing the number of pupils opting for GCSE economics.
- Making sure new courses are viable before introducing them.

147. Results in GCSE business studies in 2002 were in line with the national average. Boys attained slightly better results than girls. Pupils attained above average results in business studies in the two preceding years. As economics is a new option in Year 10 there are no previous GCSE results available. In lessons pupils' attainment is above average in both business studies and economics and they achieve well because teaching is good. For example, in a Year 10 business studies lesson pupils gained a good grasp of the issues involved in recruitment and selection of staff. In Year 10 economics pupils acquire a good understanding of equilibrium wage and the effect of introducing a statutory minimum wage.
148. Pupils' attitude and behaviour are good. They are interested in business studies and economics and are keen to learn. They participate effectively in small group and whole class discussions.
149. The quality of teaching and learning are good. Teachers have a very good knowledge and understanding of both business studies and economics so that the pupils themselves steadily acquire appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding. Teachers routinely highlight and discuss key words and phrases to improve understanding of the work to be tackled. For example, in a well-taught Year 10 economics lesson on common exchange rates the teacher emphasised phrases such as 'economic sovereignty' and 'transaction costs' to enable pupils to improve their verbal and written contributions to the lesson. The pace of lessons is rapid and teachers have high expectations of what pupils' know understand and can do.

Teachers question named pupils adeptly to make sure all are involved and use resources effectively to emphasise key features. For example, in a very good Year 10 business studies lesson the teacher amplified pupils' responses skilfully and encouragingly to promote lesson aims, made very good use of an overhead projector, linked to a computer screen for visual effect, and reviewed what pupils had learnt in a very effective plenary.

150. Leadership and management are good. The appointment of a business and enterprise manager to promote the school's new status as a business and enterprise college is beginning to bear fruit. The school participates in various local and national initiatives such as BRASS (Business Responsibility and Southwark students) and NIFTE (National Institute for Teaching Enterprise) to enhance pupils' learning. The contacts and expertise gained will benefit pupils significantly. The expansion of GCSE options that is planned includes both applied economics and statistics. GCSE law is already available. With only eight pupils currently on roll for Year 10 GCSE economics the school is in danger of offering further options too quickly and then having to retrench.

CITIZENSHIP

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

Strengths

- The successful introduction of a one year short GCSE course in citizenship for all Year 10 pupils.
- The good teaching and learning in GCSE lessons and a very high completion rate for the coursework.
- Pupils' positive attitudes and responses.
- Good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education creates a positive climate for responsible action.
- The strong sense of community within the school is a good basis for involving pupils in the wider and practical aspects of citizenship.

Areas for improvement

- A detailed audit of existing and potential coverage of citizenship within other subjects is needed.
- Further development of links with community agencies and extra curricular activities.
- There is not an established school council that promotes the practice of citizenship.
- The assessment and monitoring of the teaching and learning of citizenship across the whole school.
- The provision of teaching and learning resources.

151. Although some features of the citizenship programme have been taught across the curriculum for some time, citizenship as a distinct subject has only been introduced very recently. All Year 10 pupils study the GCSE citizenship short course in one year. They will be taking the examination this summer. Virtually the whole year group has completed their coursework and their marks indicate that the vast majority has passed, with many reaching higher standards. Pupils had to report on a citizenship activity in which they had been involved and they appear to have performed well as active citizens. This reflects the standards seen in class where good teaching and definite pupil interest resulted in good discussions about a variety of topics relating to citizenship. Pupils have achieved well in this aspect of the subject, thereby promoting some aspects of literacy. Overall, there were no major differences between the performances of girls and boys. Pupils with special needs and English as an additional

language benefited from the focus on discussions. They have gained a satisfactory understanding of a range of topics such as the freedom of the press and environmental issues. It was not possible to scrutinise the quality of their written work over time, as pupils needed their books and folders for revision for the forthcoming examination.

152. Teaching in Year 10 was good in three-quarters of the lessons seen. Pupils responded very well to open questions about the media that enabled them to formulate their own views on coverage of contentious issues such as asylum seekers. They were confident in expressing their views, encouraged by the teacher as 'devil's advocate' during a debate on the freedom of the press. The high quality of debate was a feature in all the good lessons with pupils ably demonstrating the ability to marshal thoughts and listen carefully to the views of others. Teachers have high expectations and effective teaching strategies. Overall, attitudes are good in lessons and very good in half of them. This judgement is supported by the pupils' positive comments in interviews. They found the lessons interesting and relevant to life in the real world. This allied with good relationships between teacher and pupils, results in an environment that is conducive to learning. Although teachers have used the limited amount of time very well, the allocation of only one lesson a week for the teaching of this new subject has resulted in some problems in organising and marking homework. Nevertheless, it is consistently given and highly relevant to the lessons. It was not until January of this year that all pupils had a textbook to take home, another limiting factor in the consistent production of high quality written work. Resources are sparse. There are too few alternative texts, website information and videos. The library does not have a wide range of books to encourage wide background reading or individual research, especially for the higher attainers. There is not a comprehensive bank of newspaper cuttings.
153. Practical applications of citizenship are varied. The high quality provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education promotes qualities that are the basis of good citizenship although the school has not yet highlighted the citizenship dimension. Pupils are aware of the needs of others and, for example, have a good record of involvement in charity activities. The school focuses on developing a strong sense of right and wrong, which is easily linked to an understanding of the importance of an individual response to questions of rights and responsibilities. A palpable sense that pupils are involved in a school community easily translates to scenarios that involve pupils as participants in community activities. However, there is not an established school council that provides meaningful opportunities for pupils to influence the way their school is run. It does not act as a good model of the democratic process. Pupils are unclear about how their views are represented or their involvement in the process. However, overall the subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal development. The effect of the school's extra curricula provision on the development of citizenship has not been fully explored.
154. The management of the subject is now satisfactory. A new co-ordinator for citizenship was appointed in January 2003. She has produced a considered and appropriate departmental development plan. Teachers have not received any training about the nature of the citizenship curriculum. There has not been a detailed analysis of the existing and potential contribution of subjects to its development. The personal, social and health education curriculum covers many aspects of the new curriculum but they have not yet been explicitly identified as such. Citizenship across the curriculum is in the early stages of development - with the exception of a few subjects. It is highlighted in history planning and the subject makes a very good contribution through, for example, its teaching of the nature of political parties to Year 9 pupils. Geography is involved through its teaching of global development areas and issues such as poverty. Most other departments have done little and refer to the lack of training and involvement

in curriculum development. The co-ordinator is aware of these issues and has acted to remedy the situation, including the paucity of resources. However, there has been too little time for these initiatives to have had an effect. The school has not yet tackled the issue of assessing citizenship or how to monitor teaching and learning. Nor have the various community links been fully exploited in the planning and delivery of the new curriculum.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

The overall provision in design and technology is **good**.

Strengths

- GCSE results in food and graphics are above the national average.
- Good teaching which leads to good learning.
- Teachers provide good individual support for all pupils.
- Very good relationships between pupils and teachers create good conditions for learning.

Areas for improvement

- Systems to ensure appropriate health and safety standards.
- The rigour of marking, assessment and target-setting, linked more closely to National Curriculum levels.
- The use of ICT to raise standards further.

155. Standards at the end of Year 9 are broadly in line with the national average. Teachers' assessment of pupils' work at the end of Year 9 in 2000 and 2001 were above average and this dropped to below average in 2002. These assessments did not fully match the average standards of work seen during the inspection. Pupils have below average skills in the subject when they join the school in Year 7. As a result of the work they do in Years 7 to 9 their achievement overall in design and technology by the end of year 9 is good.

156. In the work seen during the inspection, pupils develop a good range of skills including designing and making products in food, resistant materials, graphics, and electronics. Overall, pupils attain better in food and textiles than in the other specialist areas within the subject. They respond well to interesting projects in lessons and are motivated to follow the guidance provided by the teachers. Pupils are taught to use the design process well, which supports them in showing each stage of their design work. However, pupils' writing and drawing skills are undeveloped which lowers the standard of their work. In food technology, pupils cover a wide range of knowledge relating to good nutritional practice and they develop a good range of safe food preparation skills when planning and preparing meals. The use of ICT to raise standards further in Years 7 to 9 is underdeveloped and restricted by the limited ICT resources in the department.

157. GCSE results in 2002 show a drop in the proportion of students achieving A* to C grades to below the national average compared to the 2001 results which were in line with the national average. This drop was mainly due to the lower grades achieved in textiles, as the group did not have a specialist teacher at the time of the examination. As a result, they gained only limited revision opportunities and support prior to taking the examination. A larger proportion of pupils do food and graphics where the A* to C grades were better than the national average. Achievement is satisfactory overall for all pupils including those with special educational needs, those who speak English as an additional language and pupils who are gifted and talented. However, pupils in food and graphics achieve well. In Years 10 and 11, the vast majority of pupils maintain the

average standards they reach at the end of Year 9. Overall in the subject boys achieve better than the girls. Pupils in all specialist areas design good quality products and develop a good range of practical skills. In Year 11 pupils show greater awareness of industrial processes and in graphics they use the new computer aided design and manufacturing resources well to model their final design ideas. In food, pupils show an awareness of industrial practice in the food industry and this is supported in their coursework to a good level of depth and detail. There is some use of ICT to research information, handle data and calculate the nutritional value of food. Some pupils use their computers at home to increase the presentation of their final coursework. The use of ICT is now developing in the work of GCSE pupils but further progress is limited by the lack of resources.

158. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Two very good lessons were seen during the inspection. In lessons that are good or better, the teachers structure the tasks well and provide clear objectives to guide and support pupils in their learning. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject and this provides good opportunities for pupils to develop a good range of skills and knowledge to work in a range of materials. In food and graphics, pupils' learning benefits from clear guidance which is well structured both in Years 7 to 9. In Years 10 and 11, this guidance helps pupils to ensure they include the right information in their work which also extends their own knowledge and learning. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to share their good work and give praise for all when they do well. As a result pupils are enthusiastic and keen to do well. This was seen in a Year 8 graphics lesson where the teacher encouraged all pupils to show their work to the whole class as part of evaluating their homework tasks. Pupils responded very enthusiastically and they benefited from seeing the wide range of skills included and different ways in which they all responded to the same task. In examination groups, teachers create opportunities for pupils to discuss their work as a group as well as individually with the teacher and this provides good support for pupils at all attainment levels.
159. Relationships between pupils and teachers are very good and this creates a very good climate for learning. Pupils are confident about asking for help when they need it. The coursework of pupils in textiles is of good quality although they did not have sufficient support from a specialist teacher to prepare them in their revision for the final examination. As a result, the overall textiles GCSE results were well below the national average. Pupils show enthusiasm for the subject and are keen to do well. They respond well to the very good relationships they have with the teachers. They show very good attitudes to their work. Overall the subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development.
160. The head of department provides good management on a day to day basis and has established a cohesive team. She leads by example and sets good standards of planning. She maintains good working relationships, and all staff work together to maintain good standards. There is good technician support and technician staff make a positive contribution to the work in the department. The head of department has provided a good level of support to both pupils and staff during periods of staffing difficulties in order to minimise the effect on pupil achievement. This has presented particular difficulties with the lack of a specialist textiles teacher. Although teaching is monitored within the school, there are limited opportunities for staff within the department to observe each other and to share good practice. The marking and assessment of pupils' work needs to be developed further, linked more closely to National Curriculum levels, in order to ensure that all pupils make the progress of which they are capable. There is a strategic development plan and priorities for development for the department have been identified. Improvement since the last inspection is good.

161. There is insufficient support within the leadership of the school to ensure safe working conditions. As a result, pupils are at risk. The dust extraction systems are ineffective and safety checks of machine tools and small electrical appliances are not completed on a regular basis. As a result, the overall leadership of the subject within the school is unsatisfactory.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- Pupils develop a sound understanding of geographical skills and use them to make progress in lessons.
- Pupils show a keen interest in geography and concentrate well in lessons.
- Teaching is generally good. Lessons start promptly and continue at a brisk pace.
- The subject is well led and managed.

Areas for improvement

- In Years 7 to 9, suitable work needs to be provided for pupils at all levels of attainment.
- Assessment data needs to be used more effectively to inform curriculum planning.
- Key skills need to be fully integrated into the new schemes of work.

162. In 2002, attainment at the end of Year 9 was slightly below the national average. This represents a fall from the above average attainment of the previous two years. At the age of 16 standards of attainment were in line with national expectations and compared well with other subjects. In both Year 9 and the GCSE examinations, the attainment of boys was significantly higher than that of the girls.

163. In the lessons observed the levels of attainment matched national norms. In Year 7 pupils can identify the components and links in the water cycle and use this information to explain the causes of flooding. Year 8 pupils are aware of the costs and benefits of mass tourism and were able to describe their findings, using appropriate geographical vocabulary, in the form of a written report. In Year 9 they can describe and explain the effect of tectonic processes on landscapes and people using Japan as a case study. Work in exercise books is neat and well presented. 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. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make good progress in lessons.

164. In Year 10 pupils have a secure knowledge and understanding of the environmental problems associated with the extraction and use of fossil fuels and citizenship issues such as globalisation and migration. They are confident in their use of ICT which they use regularly in lessons and to present their coursework. At present relatively few pupils continue with the subject in Year 10. This is something that the department must monitor carefully in the future.

165. Teaching is good overall and the pupils learn well as a result. There were no examples of unsatisfactory teaching. Teachers demonstrate sound subject knowledge and good classroom management skills are used to sustain the interest and concentration of the pupils. Where the teaching is very good there is a greater degree of challenge in the work leading to the development of thinking and enquiry skills. There has been a clear improvement in teaching since the last inspection but there is a need to develop a wider range of resources and strategies selected to stimulate and challenge pupils of all abilities.
166. All pupils learn well. They are attentive in lessons, focus quickly on the tasks set and clearly enjoy the subject. Both boys and girls show a keen interest in their work and respond well to supportive teaching. They work collaboratively when required and relationships within the classroom are good.
167. Exercise books are marked regularly with grades for effort and attainment. Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 are also given a target grade at the end of each teaching module. Pupils are aware of the grade at which they are working. However there are inconsistencies in the quality of marking and staff must ensure that comments are provided to help the pupils make progress. The department also needs to make greater use of the statistical data provided to produce more sharply focused targets for teaching and learning.
168. The subject is enthusiastically led by a new head of department with a firm commitment to raising levels of achievement. The department has made good progress since the last inspection. The quality of teaching and learning has improved and a wide range of methods is now used to fully engage the pupils. However, the lack of opportunities for fieldwork still exists and the assessment programme in Years 7 to 9 needs further development.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- Excellent leadership and management that maintains consistently very high standards of teaching and learning throughout the department.
- Teachers' very good knowledge and understanding of the subject and of the requirements of the courses they teach.
- Very good assessment practice that shows pupils precisely what they can do and how they can improve.
- Excellent course planning that builds pupils' knowledge and understanding securely as they progress through each year.
- The very good progress and standards achieved by all pupils.
- Very good contribution made to improving basic skills.

Areas of improvement

- Review current schemes of work to extend the opportunities for pupils to use ICT in lessons.

169. Standards are well above average by the end of Year 9 and 11. The GCSE results in 2002 were above the national average and the highest gained by any subject in the school. Seventeen per cent of pupils gained one of the higher grades of A* and A. Boys' GCSE results in 2002 were well above, and those for girls below, those achieved

nationally. However, when analysing the results taking prior attainment into account, there is no significant difference in performance. The most able pupils achieve very well and their learning needs are matched to work of an appropriate standard. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language make very good progress. Overall, achievement is very good and standards have risen year on year since the last inspection.

170. By the end of Year 9, pupils' knowledge and understanding of the subject matter is very good and their listening skills are well developed. They have acquired real strengths in handling and interpreting a wide range of historical sources. They have a very good understanding of how past societies functioned and pupils across the full ability range are willing to express their views on a wide variety of historical issues.
171. By the end of Year 11, pupils can organise and communicate their research findings in a variety of ways and have developed real strengths in the critical analysis and evaluation of historical sources. The regular use of writing frames and an emphasis on learning key words from Year 7 onwards contributes to the high standards achieved by all pupils at the end of Year 11. They are well versed in the examination skills required to achieve the highest possible grades. This generates increased self-confidence and is reflected in the large numbers of pupils opting for the subject.
172. The quality of teaching and learning is very good with many excellent features. Teaching and learning was very good or better in six of the seven lessons observed and excellent in three. Teachers have a very good knowledge of their subject, plan meticulously, use lesson time well and set clear learning objectives, which they share with the pupils. This enables pupils to increase the range and depth of their knowledge and understanding. All teachers choose a wide variety of stimulating resources that are carefully linked to regular changes in teaching strategies. Pupils are stimulated to learn by lively teaching approaches that present them with an element of challenge. They are keen to engage in discussion and writing activities that help to extend the range and depth of their key historical skills. Good use is made of video clips, commercially produced resources and the local area, thus enriching pupils' appreciation of the period, places and personalities they are studying. A key factor contributing to pupils' progress is the care with which teachers match work to the needs of the individual and this ensures that all pupils are fully included in the learning process. Pupils have a very positive attitude towards their work and this improves the quality of their learning. Very positive relationships with teachers contribute to the very good achievement of all pupils, which is strength of the subject.
173. The contribution of history to the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good. The department is leading on the implementation of the National Key Stage 3 Strategy for the foundation subjects. Subject literacy, numeracy and ICT strategies are in place. The study of cultural factors in different societies and consideration of right and wrong make a strong contribution to personal development and citizenship. Good progress has been made in the use of ICT and this now needs to be embedded in the scheme of work. Until recently, the department had restricted access to computer facilities in lessons, which limited their learning opportunities in lessons.
174. Management and leadership are excellent and a major strength in the success of the department. The head of department has a very clear view of the priorities for history. The current team under his guidance is very strong, utilising a positive team approach to build upon a growing pattern of success. Resources are carefully selected to match the content of the courses offered. Teachers know their pupils well and progress is

closely monitored and evaluated. Effective use is made of the assessment data provided by the school to track individual pupil progress. The department has resolved all the issues that arose from the last inspection and made excellent improvement since that date.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

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

Strengths

- A highly committed head of department, with vision and the ability to implement change and curriculum development.
- Excellent results in the GCSE examinations and high pass rates on the GNVQ course.
- The very good extra curricular opportunities which increase pupils' ability to participate and be successful.
- Pupils' positive attitudes.
- Good contributions to numeracy.
- The recently established support for higher attainment pupils.

Areas for improvement

- The attainment of pupils at the end of Year 9.
- The provision of structured course for all pupils aged 14-16 that will enable them to cover the ICT curriculum and the school to meet statutory requirements.
- The establishment of a team of specialist ICT teachers.
- Development of a comprehensive plan for the delivery and assessment of ICT across the curriculum.

175. In 2001 and 2002, attainment at the end of Year 9 was well below the national average. Work and records seen during the inspection indicates that although there has been a thirty three per cent improvement in the results for this year, the standard of the pupils' work is still below average. This is due to a number of factors. During the last academic year, the current Year 9 had a number of temporary, non-specialist staff and there was far too little time allocated to the teaching of ICT. Although there is now a more stable staff structure and lessons are twice as long as they were, these pupils have been unable to cover the whole curriculum in sufficient depth and develop their evaluative skills.

176. Year 7 and 8 pupils are benefiting from these changes and the introduction of well structured schemes of work taught in discrete ICT lessons, linked to systematic assessment procedures. Their rate of progress is better and achievement in lessons and over time is satisfactory, although it is good in the relatively few lessons taught by experienced specialist staff. For example, a Year 7 class had been well taught about the importance of an hypotheses in data handling and were creating graphs to test their ideas about what determines the number of visitors to the United Kingdom. Lesson plans highlight suitable opportunities to extend the higher attainers. All pupils, including those with special needs, can handle specialist presentation software and e-mail. The Internet and CD-ROMs are used well to enhance research skills. However, there has been little in depth study of the impact of ICT on society, restricting the pupils' ability to reach higher standards.

177. Pupils' attainment and progress in accredited courses is very good. In 2002, 94 per cent of the class obtained a grade A- C in the GCSE class and 90 per cent achieved a pass or higher at GNVQ Intermediate level. School analysis showed that these pupils

had made very good progress when their performance was compared with their earlier attainment. These results are mirrored in the work of the current Year 11 GNVQ pupils and in the GCSE classes, with the possibility of improvement as 10 per cent of the coursework in GCSE is of A* quality.

178. Pupils are keen to succeed, as shown by their attendance at the before and after school coursework sessions and Saturday classes. GNVQ and GCSE students make good progress, helped by the teacher's expert assessment and communication of areas that need improvement. Pupils gain from the effective highlighting of the main points and consequently learn easily. For example, they understand the need to focus on user requirements when designing their coursework. Their work shows that they have been taught the importance of annotating any modification in their programme but many of the GNVQ pupils find detailed evaluation difficult. All pupils present their work well and all finish their tasks. Pupils on the GCSE course apply theory well and establish links with the local community for their project work. The pace of learning is good over time, promoted by the many opportunities for additional support that the department offers. Pupils' inclusion in these activities helps them to succeed and overcome difficulties, as indicated by the very good results and high completion rates for the courses.
179. However, it is important to note that the large percentage of pupils aged 14 to 16 who do not study these accredited courses are not receiving a satisfactory ICT education. Overall, attainment at the age of 16 is below national expectations. Pupils do have some contact with computers within their other subjects but these provide an ad hoc ICT experience that lacks consistency and coherence.
180. Although all other subjects are using ICT as a tool to aid learning, there are several, such as art and music, that have not yet fully implemented their plans. The department has rightly identified that a more rigorous approach to the co-ordination and assessment of cross-curricular ICT is required and reconvened a cross curricular planning group to accomplish this.
181. Teaching is satisfactory in Years 7, 8 and 9, and good in Years 10 and 11. Pupils throughout the school benefit from the clear communication of the very good knowledge of the head of department, who sets high standards for behaviour and academic progress. However, at both key stages, but especially for pupils aged 11 to 14, a number of non-specialist staff, new to teaching ICT and with other subject responsibilities, find it hard to deliver high quality lessons. Homework is well used to reinforce and extend understanding in all classes.
182. Although they and the pupils are strongly supported by well written guides and schemes of work, some teachers lack the subject knowledge and confidence to answer challenging questions. The head of department is aware of this and has arranged extra support for teachers in their lunch break and in the classroom. The school is actively involved in implementing the national Key Stage 3 ICT strategy and many of the features of this initiative are having a positive effect on teaching standards. Teachers make a brisk start to lessons and use questioning well to recap pupils' understanding from previous lessons. Pupils respond well to the teacher's demonstration of the salient points on the interactive whiteboard, although there is scope for pupils to be more actively involved. Practical and problem solving tasks reinforce the introduction and engage the pupils. At times, too little emphasis on sharing learning objectives, and a lack of good review procedures at the end of lessons lessened the ability of the pupils to learn well. The quality of marking is inconsistent with not all teachers adequately referring to what pupils need to do to improve. There are

many opportunities for pupils to practise their numeracy skills but the teaching of literacy is unsatisfactory. Although the pupils' guides list the technical vocabulary there is not a focus on looking at, and writing, these words and associated language during the lessons. This is not helpful to those pupils with English as an additional language, although the good range of well prepared booklets offers some support.

183. Year 10 and 11 pupils taking the accredited courses benefit from the expert teaching of the Head of Department. Teaching is good or better in three-quarters of the classes and pupils responded accordingly, with very positive attitudes to learning. Lessons are well planned, executed, and good one to one teaching, based on a detailed assessment of the pupil's strengths and weaknesses, promotes good learning. GNVQ pupils worked hard and successfully to improve their understanding of how to design and structure a website home page. Focused teaching of the theory underlying the presentation of information, and the consistent requirement that pupils participate, resulted in a good increase in pupil knowledge in a Year 10 ICT class. There are no major differences between the performance of girls and boys, reflecting what happens in younger classes.
184. The management of ICT is good. A range of new initiatives has been introduced and examination courses for 14 to 16 years olds embedded. Pupils' attainment and progress on these courses is very good. Good schemes of work have been produced which support the teaching and learning of ICT in discrete lessons well, as do the numerous clearly written guides and booklets. The Head of department is a good teacher who sets high standards and there is now no weak teaching. The monitoring of teaching and learning is not yet finely tuned. A staffing issue remains, despite the efforts of the school to remedy the situation. The head of department has an onerous task with many tasks to fulfil, including the introduction of law. Good use is made of the technician to support teaching and learning within the classroom and in fulfilling the school's good policy on the safe use of the Internet. The school has been most successful in increasing its hard and software stock. Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been good.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Overall the quality of provision in modern foreign languages is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- The very high quality of teaching, which is having a positive impact on pupil motivation.
- Leadership and management are very good.

Areas for improvement

- To continue to implement strategies to raise standards.
- To incorporate ICT more fully into the curriculum as a learning tool.

185. In both French and Spanish in the 2002 GCSE examinations, the proportion of pupils gaining A* - C grades was well below national averages. The Spanish results were slightly better than in French. Performance in languages was below that in other subjects and results over a number of years show a decline. Contributory factors have been the difficulty in recruiting and retaining staff and the fact that the whole cohort is entered for the examination. Staffing difficulties have affected the 2002 end of Year 9 standardised teacher assessments in both languages. The proportion of pupils gaining level 5 and above was well below national average and a dip from the previous year.

186. Pupils in Years 8 and 9 learn French or Spanish, but French only is being taught to the current Year 7, because of the shortage of Spanish specialists. Pupils whose mother tongue is not English are being encouraged - with teaching support - to study their own language in addition to the language offered. There have been significant developments recently, resulting in the raising of the profile of French and Spanish, also standards.
187. From inspection evidence, standards in Years 7 to 9 are seen to be broadly in line with expectations and achievement is average. The majority of pupils enjoy their language studies, including many Year 9 pupils who previously lacked motivation. Grammar is taught in context and pupils are encouraged to work out rules for themselves. There are many opportunities for oral work and class repetition to improve pronunciation and fluency is taken seriously. Role plays and pair work build up confidence. Written tasks are planned to enable everyone to work confidently. There are support materials for pupils with special educational needs and the higher attaining pupils are able to extend their writing, allowing them to be creative. Understanding skills are good and pupils can pick out key points in reading and listening tasks.
188. No Year 11 lessons were observed owing to study leave, but samples of coursework seen were of a high standard. Overall standards in Year 10 are in line with expectations and achievement is average. Pupil confidence in oral work is increasing and the higher ability pupils are keen to answer in detail, using a wide range of vocabulary and expressions. A Year 10 French group read with understanding, but some lacked fluency, which is a focus for improvement. The literacy strategy is embedded in lessons, so that pupils are able to develop and expand written skills and write for a variety of audience. Pupils take pride in the presentation of their work. No lessons were seen using information technology, but coursework and displays are evidence that pupils are competent in its use. Listening skills are well developed as a result of lessons being conducted in French or Spanish and most lessons include a taped listening element.
189. Teaching is a strength and is very good overall. Some of the real strengths are the use of the foreign language throughout the lessons, which provides a role model for the pupils; shared objectives involving everyone from the start of the lesson, with a plenary to check learning; the planning and sequencing of lessons, involving a wide variety of methodology and a brisk pace, which keeps everyone's interest; the enthusiasm, high expectations and challenges from the teachers. Behaviour is very good and pupils in the main are attentive. Good classroom management is a further key to the progress now taking place in lessons. Relevant homework is regularly set and marking is helpful and encouraging. Overall, the subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development.
190. Leadership and management are very good. The newly appointed head of department has analysed the situation and has worked with determination to remedy the weaknesses. A development plan is already having positive effects on standards. Raising of standards is a priority and strategies in place include target setting and an awareness of national criteria levels. Technology is seen as an important learning tool. Schemes of work are now in place and a handbook has been written. Stunning materials have been produced by the teachers and ideas shared. Staff morale is good as a result of the improvements in pupils' attitudes to learning a foreign language.
191. Issues from the last inspection have been addressed by the new approaches and precise planning, so that vocabulary learning is encouraged. Levels of understanding have increased. There are opportunities to extend writing and oral work. Lessons are

now well planned and sequenced and the teaching environment makes language learning pleasurable, as pupils become aware of their success.

MUSIC

The overall quality of provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- The teachers' subject knowledge encourages students to learn.
- There are many opportunities to learn instruments.
- Music makes a good contribution to pupils' social and cultural development.

Areas for improvement

- Continue to raise standards by improving planning.
- Develop assessment and use national curriculum levels.
- Provide greater opportunities for pupils to use ICT.

192. The standards of work seen are below average by the end of Years 9 and 11. Because of pupils' prior attainment this represents satisfactory achievement for all abilities over time. The department has had a number of supply teachers and the recent appointment of a new teacher for a year has brought some stability to the subject. However, music is on a carousel with other subjects and the time allowance for the subject is very restricted. Consequently since the previous inspection improvement is unsatisfactory.
193. The 2002 teacher assessments show that pupils' attainment at the end of Year 9 is below the national average and the results of the last GCSE cohort in 2001 showed a similar picture. In the lessons seen all groups including ethnic minorities, those with English as an additional language and pupils with special educational needs all achieve satisfactorily. There is no significant difference between the work of boys and girls.
194. Many pupils learn instruments and the three instrumental teachers give very good value in the teaching that they do and the extra-curricular activities and visits that they organise. This makes a good contribution to pupils' social and cultural development.
195. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9. Because all lessons include playing keyboards this becomes monotonous for older pupils and learning is restricted if no other activity is planned. In a Year 9 lesson based on the Blues pupils became restless and needed a change of activity. Better planning in Year 7 enabled pupils to improve keyboard melodies, sing a freedom song in parts, join in a short discussion on justice and happily contribute to a quiz on notation. This led to good learning. Taped examples of compositions by a high ability Year 8 class demonstrated quality performances of variations in two and three parts. There was careful counting of beats and listening for when to start playing. Talented pupils had developed a good understanding of musical conventions and performed well in their contrasting arrangements. Although less confident pupils lacked a sense of rhythm their contributions were still effective. These well-planned activities ensured that good learning was taking place. Homework is given regularly but no ICT is used. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are generally satisfactory but tend to deteriorate when lessons lack interest.

196. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in Years 10 and 11 but planning needs to help pupils learn about composition techniques and how to tackle listening tests in addition to playing instruments. Year 10 pupils slowly build up their knowledge of musical history and conventions by writing notes and answering multi-choice questions. A recording of Year 11 GCSE performance pieces shows that many pupils have reached a satisfactory standard in playing and singing. Unfortunately no examples of their compositions or written work were available because these had been sent to the examination board. Although a computer consultant worked with the department on the use of cubase software, this does not seem to have been developed. In discussions with a sample of Year 11 pupils it became obvious that their studies had suffered through lack of continuity in teaching. All felt that they were ill-equipped to take the examination. Overall the subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development.
197. There is satisfactory leadership of the subject from the teacher-in-charge who has only been in post a few months. However certain management tasks need to be addressed. The scheme of work and the development plan are in place but need revision. Improved planning is necessary to provide a variety of learning opportunities that will help to raise attainment in lessons. Assessment will be more effective if better records are kept and the National Curriculum levels are used as a benchmark. The department has good accommodation but there is a shortage of classroom instruments and ICT opportunities.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Curriculum policies and guidelines in the department have the potential to set high standards and provide clear educational direction.
- Comprehensive scheme of work providing a progressive programme of study.

Areas for improvement

- Further development of the assessment procedures and the involvement of pupils in their own assessment.
- Strategies to identify pupil attainment on entry in order to more effectively track the progress of pupils throughout the school.
- To ensure curriculum policies are included within the schemes of work and are implemented into the teaching.
- The establishment of appropriate health and safety procedures.

198. There is no baseline assessment of physical education in place in order to identify the extent of pupil progress during Years 7 to 9. Evidence from the inspection indicates that by the time pupils reach Year 9, attainment is broadly in line with national levels of expectation. GCSE physical education results in 2002 show that 23 per cent of pupils gain A* to C grades which is well below the national average of 56 per cent. There has been a negative trend in examination results over the past three years; they have consistently been below the national average. Although examination results have been below the national average, the results in relation to the entry level have recently started to show some improvement. There is no teacher assessment data available at the end of Year 11 and at the time of the inspection there are no Year 11 pupils in school. Evidence from the inspection indicates that attainment by the end of Year 11 is in line

with national levels of expectation. The behaviour of girls often influences their attainment and causes a difference between their attainment and that of the boys.

199. Pupils make satisfactory progress during Years 7 to 9. By the time they reach Year 9 the attainment of pupils in cricket is in line with national expectations. Some pupils are able to repeat and refine actions with both quality and control, for example in cricket when pupils are able to select and apply the most appropriate stroke to the ball being bowled. The standard of performance in athletic activities is also in line with national expectations. In Year 10 when pupils participate in rugby, they are able to apply their skills into the game with some success. The enthusiasm and commitment of pupils to games activities is good. During examination lessons, pupils answer questions on 'body types' and willingly enter into discussions, relating their discussions effectively into a variety of sporting contexts. Written work is of a satisfactory standard, with a variety of teaching strategies being adopted to promote learning. There is an effective marking policy in place and pupils receive good guidance on their progress. In extra curricular activities pupils are able to demonstrate good levels of attainment in a variety of sports such as football and trampolining. During these activities pupils achieve success either gaining representative honours through individual sports or during team competitions, such as football.
200. Teaching in physical education across all year groups is satisfactory. Teachers generally have good subject knowledge, and use this to provide pupils with a variety of appropriate activities. In the unsatisfactory lesson the behaviour of the pupils prevented any learning from taking place. In all other lessons, pupils are generally given appropriate amounts of time to consolidate their learning, and improve their skills. Pupils' learning is often reinforced through the effective review of learning objectives at the end of the lesson. They often demonstrate positive attitudes towards learning, responding well to their teachers and peers. In examination groups teachers make good use of question and answer techniques and effectively apply appropriate strategies to accommodate the way different individuals learn. Pupils are not involved in their own assessment during lessons or aware of their own level of attainment. Pupils with special educational needs learn and progress well.
201. The management of the department is satisfactory with departmental documentation, policies and guidelines providing clear direction for curriculum development. The examination procedures and programme are improving. The learning resources are of a good quality although they are not sufficient to ensure the full participation of all pupils. The range of teaching approaches used in practical lessons needs to be further developed and integrated into schemes of work to promote effective learning. The provision of literacy is good, with the good use of key words, discussion and displays, although more needs to be done in the provision of planned strategies for the inclusion of numeracy and ICT into the physical education curriculum. Access to off-site facilities is restricted by the time available during lessons. On-site accommodation is constrained by the lack of space and as a result restricts the breadth and balance of the curriculum programme. The extra curricular provision provides good opportunities for pupils to engage in a variety of activities and inter school competitions. Risk assessments are conducted before each lesson but formal annual health and safety and risk assessment arrangements need to be established.
202. Since the last inspection the department has had a very unstable and inconsistent staffing situation. The statutory requirements of the national curriculum are not currently being met in the boys' physical education curriculum for Years 7 to 9 as only three of the four areas of activity from the programme of study are being taught.