

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST GEORGE'S ROMAN CATHOLIC SCHOOL**

Maida Vale, London W9 1RB

LEA area: Westminster

Unique reference number: 101155

Headteacher: Mr P Jakszta

Reporting inspector: John Carnaghan  
1352

Dates of inspection: 10 -13 February 2003

Inspection number: 249089

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	11-16 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Lanark Road Maida Vale London
Postcode:	W9 1RB
Telephone number:	020 7328 0904
Fax number:	020 7624 6083
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr A Allun
Date of previous inspection:	May 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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1352	John Carnaghan	Registered inspector		What sort of school is it?  The school's results and pupils' achievements  How well are pupils taught?  What should the school do to improve further?
14347	Joan Lindsay	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development  How well does the school care for pupils?  The school's links with parents
1068	Jan Allcorn	Team inspector	English as an additional language  Mathematics	
20629	John Bryson	Team inspector	English	
17694	James Forrest	Team inspector	Science	How well pupils' work is assessed
14638	Stephen Williams	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
12336	Malcolm Overend	Team inspector	Geography	How well is the school led and managed?
21822	Helen Maskew	Team inspector	Special educational needs  History	How good are curricular opportunities offered to pupils?

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23550	Marie Blewitt	Team inspector	Educational inclusion Citizenship Modern foreign languages	
2007	Julia Page	Team inspector	Art and design	
11618	Barry Handley	Team inspector	Design and technology	
30198	Reg Chick	Team inspector	Physical education	
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St George's Roman Catholic School is a comprehensive school for pupils aged 11 to 16 years. With 579 pupils on roll, the school is smaller than average. It serves the London Borough of Westminster and also draws its pupils from a wide area in bordering London boroughs. These areas have a number of considerable social disadvantages. These difficulties are exacerbated by the large numbers of immigrant children who join the school throughout the year. Many primary schools send pupils to St George's and the school is growing in popularity. The proportion of pupils (44.5 per cent) known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. Where comparison is made to similar schools in this report, these are schools where more than 35 per cent, but less than 50 per cent, of pupils are eligible for free school meals; this change has been made to more accurately reflect the considerable social disadvantages that face the school. The proportion of pupils on the special educational needs (SEN) register (30 per cent) is above the national average; the proportion with Statements of Educational Needs (nearly three per cent) is average. There are 35 pupils at the higher levels of the SEN Code of Practice, 13 of whom have Statements of Special Educational Need. Their needs, in the main, concern emotional and behavioural difficulties and speech difficulties. The proportion of pupils speaking English as an additional language (EAL) at 63 per cent is very high compared with the national average and approximately one quarter of these pupils are at an early stage of learning English. Over two-thirds of the pupils in the school are of ethnic minority origin. The number of pupils who join or leave the school during the course of the school year is very high. The school admits large numbers of refugees, and has over 100 such pupils. The attainment of pupils when they enter the school, as shown by the outcomes of national testing and standardised testing undertaken by the school, is well below average and, in some cases, very low. The school underwent significant changes in September 2001 when a new headteacher and senior management team were appointed.

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

St George's is an improving school that is very well led. The headteacher and staff are making great efforts to move the school forward and there is evidence of clear progress in a number of areas. In particular, relationships are much more positive and pupils show a real love for their school. The standards pupils reach are starting to improve and their achievement is now satisfactory. Teaching has improved and is now good overall. This has been a strong motivator to pupils, whose learning is also good. However, numeracy is not taught in the full range of subjects, as it should be. The school's curriculum is satisfactory, but it is incomplete in information and communication technology (ICT). The school's current assessment procedures do not provide suitable information to help set targets and assist pupils to learn. This is a particular disadvantage to pupils who speak English as an additional language, who are often placed in the wrong teaching group. Gifted and talented pupils are not sufficiently stretched. Boys' standards in tests have been consistently better than those of girls, in contrast to the national trend. The overall effectiveness of the school is good and, although it is very expensive per pupil, in the light of the considerable social and educational issues it faces, it gives satisfactory value for money.

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

- The headteacher and senior staff provide very good leadership. They set a very good example in their involvement in every aspect of the school's daily life and the warm yet constructive relationships they foster with pupils.
- Pupils achieve satisfactorily in their time at school and standards are starting to rise from their very low levels.
- Teaching is good. In particular, teachers consistently show high expectations of pupils and manage their behaviour well.
- Pupils are strongly committed to the school and are very pleased with the improvements that have been made.
- Active promotion of good behaviour and attendance has been effective and the school has a very positive ethos.





### What could be improved

- Standards of numeracy are too low; the school does too little to promote improvements in numeracy beyond the teaching of mathematics.
- What is currently provided for pupils in ICT does not meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. A number of minor breaches of statutory requirements should be attended to.
- The school does not assess pupils' work properly or use the results of assessments to set clear targets for pupils and raise their expectations of what they can achieve. In particular, pupils who speak English as an additional language are poorly assessed and, as a result, are too often placed in the wrong teaching group.
- In contrast to the national pattern, girls' attainment is significantly lower than that of boys.
- Pupils who are identified as gifted and talented are insufficiently challenged in many lessons.

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

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

The school was last inspected in 2001. Standards of attainment have generally risen in line with the improving national trend and pupils' achievement is much better. Of the key issues at the last inspection, standards across the curriculum have improved, particularly in the last year. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 has been developed to offer a better range of opportunities, which are more appropriate to pupils' learning needs. The roles of middle managers are now more clearly defined, but they do not do enough to evaluate teaching and standards in their subjects. Attendance and punctuality have improved considerably. The governing body is now more effective at holding the school to account and contributes strongly to the school's strategic planning, although it has failed to ensure that the school meets all statutory requirements. Overall, with improvements in teaching, the school has improved significantly since the last inspection.

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
GCSE examinations	E	E*	E	D

<b>Key</b>	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
very low	E*

Pupils enter the school with standards that are well below average and, in some cases, very low. The vast majority of them have SEN or speak English as an additional language. Turnover of pupils is very high. These factors make comparing examination results with national and other averages unreliable indicators of pupils' achievement. Results in 2002 in the national testing at the end of Year 9 were very low in English and in the bottom five per cent nationally. In mathematics and science they were well below average. In comparison with similar schools, English results were well below average and those in mathematics and science were above average. The trend over the last four years is of overall improvement, which is in line with the national upward trend. In 2002 the overall GCSE performance, based on average points score, was well below average; compared to similar schools it was below average. The proportion of pupils gaining five or more grades A\*-C and A\*-G was well below average; for those gaining at least one grade A\*-G it was very low. Compared to similar schools these results were below average. These pupils made well below average progress when compared to that of pupils nationally with similar end of Year 9 results. The proportion of pupils gaining grades A\*-C and their average points scores were generally well below the national averages in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, modern foreign languages and music. They were below average in history and geography. In art and design they were very low. In ICT, results were above average. Compared to the

national average, girls do less well than boys. The school largely met its targets in 2002 both in terms of pupils achieving five or more GCSE results at A\*-C grades and in terms of their average points score.

Current standards of Year 9 pupils are generally much improved on earlier standards. This is largely due to improved teaching and the period of stability that the school has experienced. Current standards are broadly similar to nationally expected levels in English and art and design. They are below expectations in all other subjects except music, where they are well below expectations. Given the well below average standards shown by pupils on starting the school, this represents generally satisfactory achievement overall for these pupils. Standards of pupils currently in Year 11 are at the expected level in English. They are below expectations in mathematics, double science, art and design, history, geography, design and technology and ICT. They are well below what is expected in music and modern foreign languages. Given the standards pupils have on entry to the school and their attainment at the end of Year 9, the overall achievement of these pupils is also satisfactory. Year 11 pupils in earlier years achieved much lower standards because they were unable to benefit from the recently improved provision in the school.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils believe strongly in their school and see it as a positive element in their lives.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils are generally calm and sensible; a minority of pupils sometimes misbehave and can be rowdy. There is very little bullying and no evidence of sexism or racism.
Personal development and relationships	Good. The school works hard to support and foster pupils' personal development and to build good relationships, and pupils respond well to this.
Attendance	Satisfactory, broadly similar to the national average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11
Quality of teaching	Good	Good

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

Teaching overall is good. In Years 7 to 9 it is good in all subjects except English and music, where it is very good, and mathematics, art and design, design and technology, ICT and geography, where it is satisfactory. Most elements in the teaching of Years 7 to 9 are good. However, the use of homework, teachers' knowledge and understanding, and the use of ongoing assessment are all satisfactory. In Years 10 and 11 teaching is also good. It is very good in English and music and good in science, art and design, history and physical education. In the other subjects it is satisfactory. The particular strengths in the teaching are similar to those for younger pupils, but teaching has greater strengths in the high expectations that are set for pupils as they approach their GCSE and other examinations. Throughout the school, skills of literacy are satisfactorily taught in English lessons and are being developed well in most other subjects. Numeracy has, in comparison, been neglected, and the way it is taught across the curriculum is unsatisfactory.

The way in which the school meets the needs of most of its pupils is good. In this small school, pupils' varied needs are well known to teachers and they work hard to provide work with an appropriate degree

of challenge. Pupils' learning is good, overall. Pupils work hard, showing interest and commitment to their studies. Because assessment is unsatisfactory, pupils are often ill-informed about their progress and what they should do to make improvements. For pupils who speak English as an additional language the levels of help they receive enable them to make good gains in their learning at all ages.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The range of subjects offered in Years 10 and 11 is much improved. However, the provision of ICT is incomplete. Too little teaching time is allocated to science in Years 10 and 11 and in English in Years 8 and 9.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. The provision for these pupils is organised to meet their needs, although individual education plans are not user-friendly.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. The school has identified areas for development and appropriate action is being taken.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The school successfully encourages pupils' social and moral development. The school consistently fosters pupils' spiritual development. The school creates good opportunities to enhance pupils' cultural understanding.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactorily. Pupils are satisfactorily supported. However, the school has not produced enough useful assessment information to show how pupils' learning develops. What exists is not consistently used to set targets to improve standards.

The working partnership with parents is satisfactory. The school works to foster links and has encouraged the recent establishment of a parent/teacher association and parents give some support. However, school reports do not convey information about how pupils are progressing in a way that is readily understandable to either parents or pupils.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership of the headteacher is very good and is a significant factor in the climate for improvement in the school. He is a positive and cheery influence in the school's life. In this, he is ably supported by his senior managers. The management of subjects is satisfactory and is developing well.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. However, the relatively new governing body has not yet ensured that the National Curriculum for ICT is followed in full or attended to other minor statutory matters. However, governors provide very effective support in other aspects of their work with the school. They know its strengths and weaknesses and have a shared vision for its future development.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory. The school's monitoring of what it does is incomplete. Assessment information is too little used and, as yet, has too little impact on pupils' attainment and expectations.

The strategic use of resources	Good. The school uses available resources thoroughly to meet its aim of providing a better education for its pupils.
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Staff work very hard to provide a pleasant environment. The provision of teachers is satisfactory and the school has been able to recruit enough staff and has set about meeting their training needs with energy. The school regularly overspends its budget. This situation is agreed and jointly managed with the local education authority. Plans are in place to eliminate this situation in future years. Application of the principles of best value is satisfactory.

## **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school has high expectations.</li> <li>• Pupils make good progress.</li> <li>• Teaching is good.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• Children like school.</li> <li>• They feel comfortable approaching the school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The information they receive about pupils' progress.</li> <li>• The amount of homework set.</li> <li>• Working more closely with parents.</li> </ul>

Only a small minority of parents returned questionnaires or attended the parents' meeting. Of the positive points raised, the evidence of the inspection agrees that teaching and the school's expectations are good. The progress pupils make is satisfactory, overall. Leadership and management are good and children like school very much. Parents are welcomed into the school. Of the negative issues, inspection evidence indicates that information for parents is unsatisfactory because reports tend to be obscurely written. The school works with parents satisfactorily and the setting of homework is satisfactory, if a little inconsistent.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The attainment of pupils when they come to the school, as indicated by the results of national and other testing, is well below the national average. Pupils are admitted to the school throughout the school year and many of these are refugees or immigrants who have severe social and learning difficulties. The difficult history of the school with staffing and disciplinary problems has undoubtedly had a serious effect on standards. However, the stability and successes enjoyed by the school in recent times have started to improve standards in many areas. These improvements are not yet reflected in national test and examination results.
2. In 2002, the proportion of pupils who gained five or more grades A\*-C in the GCSE examination was well below the national average. The proportion who gained five or more grades A\*-G was well below the national average as was pupils' average total point score. Over the last four years, pupils' results have been below the national average or very low. Over the same period, there has been a significant difference, overall, between the performance of boys and girls. Girls do less well when compared with the national trend, in which girls perform better than boys. The school is becoming increasingly aware of these differences, but cannot fully explain them. Compared with other schools with similar end of Year 9 assessment results in Year 2000, the proportion of pupils who gained five or more grades A\*-C was well below average. In terms of average points, this comparison is also well below average. The proportion of pupils gaining five or more GCSE grades A\*-G was below average; that for one or more was well below average. Compared with similar schools, performance in GCSE examinations was largely below average. The trend over the last five years has been broadly in line with the rising national trend. The studies of many of the pupils who took the 2002 examinations suffered when the school experienced disciplinary and other difficulties over a protracted period.
3. GCSE results in 2002 were well below average in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, modern foreign languages and music. They were very low in art and design. Results were below average in history and geography. In ICT results were above average. The school set challenging targets for 2002, both for the proportion of pupils gaining five or more grades A\*-C and their average total point score and largely met them. Targets for 2003 are higher, but realistic, and inspection evidence indicates that they are likely to be achieved.
4. Results in 2002, in the national testing at the end of Year 9, were very low when compared with the national average and in the lowest five per cent nationally. They were broadly average for similar schools. Results in English were very low, nationally and well below the average for similar schools. In mathematics and science, results were well below the national average and above similar schools' average. Over the last three years, pupils' performance has fallen to be very low in English, has remained well below average in mathematics and has improved a little in science. The school's trend over the last three years has been broadly in line with the national trend, in that the school's results have improved at about the same rate as the rising national average. In comparison with pupils' attainment on entry, the 2002 results represent satisfactory achievement.

5. From scrutiny of work, classroom observation and the outcomes of testing, the standards of work of pupils currently in Years 9 and 11 are, overall, below nationally expected levels for pupils of their age. This represents a marked improvement in standards. In Year 9, they are broadly average in English and art and design. They are below average in science, design and technology, geography, history, ICT, modern foreign languages and physical education. They are well below national expectation in mathematics and music. Current standards in Year 11 are similar to national expectations in English and geography. They are below expectations in mathematics, science, art and design, design and technology, history, ICT, and physical education. They are well below national expectations in modern foreign languages and music.
6. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in all subjects of the curriculum in both Years 7 to 9 and Years 10 and 11.
7. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment. Pupils who enter the school with very low reading skills receive good support from teachers and learning support assistants and, consequently, make only slow gains in their reading and other literacy skills. Pupils with Statements of Educational Needs make satisfactory progress overall, but because some teachers are not always well informed about their needs they do not always make the progress they could. This is largely because the understanding and use of individual education plans (IEPs) by teachers in lessons is inconsistent. Some teachers have good awareness of the individual needs of their pupils and how to manage them, but others do not. The current format of IEPs is not user-friendly for either pupils or parents, and many pupils' knowledge and understanding of their SEN targets is vague.
8. EAL pupils' progress is at least equivalent to that of their peers and often better. The attitudes most pupils bring to their studies and their commitment contribute significantly to this achievement. Progress is better in Years 10 and 11 for able pupils who have acquired good language skills and in Years 7 to 9 for higher attaining pupils placed in appropriate ability groups. Progress is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. The school does not yet analyse results sufficiently to identify how well EAL pupils achieve overall, in comparison to other pupils, and where future priorities need to be targeted.
9. Pupils have literacy skills that are broadly in line with national expectations. On the whole, pupils receive good encouragement to develop a wide range of reading and to develop their spoken and written skills. Standards of numeracy are below expectations. Pupils develop numeracy skills in mathematics, but lack of encouragement or opportunity elsewhere in their studies means that they lack aptitudes in doing mental calculations, and in other areas.
10. Standards in ICT are below the national expectation. The curriculum structure restricts opportunities for pupils to achieve satisfactorily. Because there has been very little strategic planning of the subject, other subjects do not contribute sufficiently to the development of pupils' ICT skills. Therefore, skills in these areas, and their application, are underdeveloped. There are few opportunities for other departments to use ICT to enhance their subject teaching or to consolidate the teaching of the ICT department.

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

11. Pupils throughout the school have maintained the very good attitudes to all aspects of school life that were seen at the previous inspection. In talking to them they said that they very much enjoy coming to school, and appreciate the recent improvements in atmosphere that have taken place. Although only a very small number of parents returned the pre-inspection questionnaire, all those who did stated that their child liked coming to school. The great majority of pupils show an eagerness to learn, settle quickly at the start of lessons and remain focused on their tasks. For example, in a Year 8 mathematics lesson all pupils approached their work on calculating the area and perimeter of shapes with enthusiasm and they enjoyed discussing how to calculate the area of an irregular shape. Pupils also participate eagerly in the very many extra-curricular activities such as the lunchtime games club run for Year 7 pupils. Activities also take place after school and at weekends and these are well attended.
12. Behaviour standards have been maintained at the good levels seen at the time of the previous inspection. Most of the parents who responded to the questionnaire believe behaviour to be good. Behaviour in lessons is generally good, although a very small number of pupils do not behave as well with temporary teachers or if the school's behaviour strategies are not applied consistently. Movement around the corridors is still occasionally boisterous. Although staff do patrol the corridors there is little insistence that pupils and staff adhere to the notices that request everyone to walk on the left. As a result, bottlenecks occur and this occasionally leads to some, albeit amicable, pushing. Behaviour in the playground is good despite the fact that the area is relatively small. Pupils are allowed to remain inside at breaktimes and it is to their credit that they do not abuse this privilege. Very good behaviour was seen during an assembly for Year 10 pupils.
13. There was no evidence of any oppressive behaviour such as bullying, sexism or racism. Pupils spoken to both formally and informally during the inspection stated that they feel safe and secure in the school and that if they have any concerns they are very confident that staff will resolve the matter swiftly and fairly. The presence of a police officer on site full-time has had a very positive effect on behaviour as he has established an excellent rapport with the pupils who have very high levels of respect for him. A positive result of the good levels of behaviour combined with the very high levels of support for pupils who have challenging behaviour is evident in the reduction in exclusions. There have been no permanent exclusions during this academic year and the total number of pupils excluded has been reduced, as has the number of days lost to exclusions.
14. Relationships throughout the school are good. Pupils respond very well to being treated firmly, fairly and with respect. Pupils have an extremely high regard for the present headteacher, particularly as he is nearly always in the playground at break-times and at the end of the day. They know that he is approachable as are all the other staff, teaching and non-teaching. The police officer has also done much to foster good relationships in the school particularly as pupils have come to realise the positive effect of his presence in school. Pupils also relate well to each other regardless of background, race or ability. They show a satisfactory understanding of the effect of their actions on others and good levels of respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of the very many different cultures represented in the school. Pupils who have limited English are often assisted voluntarily by others, who help to translate for them and get them used to school routines. For example, a Year 10 pupil spent the morning registration period helping a boy in Year 7 who had only arrived in this country a few days before.

15. The initiative that pupils show and the way they take personal responsibility for their own learning and for helping around the school are satisfactory. The school council has only been recently formed and so is not yet fully effective. However, some groups of class representatives are already meeting regularly and planning charity and other events. Pupils in Year 11 have the opportunity to be prefects and assist in corridor and lunchtime duties. Although older pupils do assist younger ones on an informal basis, there is not yet a formal mentoring system in place and opportunities are limited for younger pupils to take responsible roles.
16. Attendance has improved slightly since the previous inspection and is now in line with national averages in relation to both authorised and unauthorised absence. Punctuality to lessons is satisfactory, but there is still a small minority of pupils who are frequently late in the morning, although some pupils do travel considerable distances to get to school and can be affected by transport problems. There are very few parents who remove their children for holidays during term time, although there is a small amount of parentally condoned absence for other reasons.

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

17. Teaching is good, overall. Twenty-two per cent of lessons seen were very good or better, 38 per cent were good and 37 per cent satisfactory. Three per cent of teaching was unsatisfactory. Teaching is consistent; it is good both in Years 10 and 11 and in Years 7 to 9. This consistency is largely because the school has placed strong emphasis on training teachers in good classroom practice. For example, many lessons start with a clear explanation to the pupils of the lesson's learning aims and conclude with a summary, which evaluates to what degree the aims have been met. This emphasis on sharing good practice has been valuable in ensuring that the many new and unqualified staff are confident and competent classroom practitioners and continue to develop their skills. The most experienced teachers are employed in the GCSE years and so teaching in this area has more strengths than in Years 7 to 9. The teaching of English and music is very good. It is good in science, history, physical education, art and design and in design and technology to Years 10 and 11, and in modern foreign languages to Years 7 to 9. It is satisfactory in all other subjects.
18. Teaching has many more strengths than areas for development. Because teachers know their subjects well they are able to deliver interesting lessons that engage pupils' interest. In an excellent English lesson to develop Year 8 pupils' understanding of murder mystery writing, the teacher's very strong knowledge of the genre ensured a confident presentation and an alert response from the pupils. This meant that pupils' questions were perceptive and thoroughly answered, increasing their self-assurance. Knowledge was presented in small 'bites' so pupils were able to assimilate it easily, before moving on. The teacher knew the pupils well and was able to adapt the work set to support those who needed it and stretch the higher attainers. The way teachers adapt work to meet pupils' individual learning needs is generally good. Pupils at the school have an enormous variety of differing needs, particularly linguistic and behavioural. Teachers usually show good awareness of individual requirements and strive to meet these by planning and reacting to pupils appropriately. A Year 11 science lesson on animal habitats provides a good example. When questioning the pupils, the teacher adapted questions to particular groups or individuals, who, as a result, all felt included in the learning process. Worksheets were pitched at the correct level for different groups of pupils and learning assistants were effectively utilised where they could be most helpful in promoting learning. As a result of these measures, all pupils learnt well in the lesson.



19. Pupils are usually well managed. They say they appreciate the firm, yet friendly, approach that many teachers use in classrooms. Because of this, most lessons are purposeful and little time is wasted in organisational matters. A good Year 10 ICT lesson was typical. Pupils started the session sitting away from computers so they were not distracted while the teacher explained the context of the lesson and the learning objectives. Because of the clarity of this element of the lesson, pupils were able to move to work on the computers designing and producing a poster with confidence and speed. In physical education, teachers use their voices to ensure good control, but also to encourage pupils and this engages pupils who show good commitment to their work.
20. The expectations that teachers have of pupils are often challenging. These are firmly based both on a good knowledge of pupils' aptitudes and needs as well as an understanding of the needs of public examinations, such as GCSE. The firm desire of teachers to push pupils towards success in examinations by the time they leave school means that expectations are higher in Years 10 and 11. Pupils respond well to this. In a good Year 11 business lesson the teacher's brisk, focused and enthusiastic introduction, the very good resources and the emphasis on appropriate key words enabled all pupils to 'attack' their work with energy. The teacher knew the needs of particular groups of pupils and acted appropriately; pupils with English as an additional language benefited from personal help from the teacher so were able to achieve as well as the rest of the class. The strengths noted above mean that many lessons have good pace. Deadlines are set so that pupils strive to meet targets and work energetically. Time elements of lessons are carefully planned so that all parts of the lesson, including a concluding session, are given appropriate time.
21. Teaching sometimes has weaknesses where pupils do not have accurate information of the level at which they are working or what they should do to improve. Marking of pupils' books is inconsistent; at times it can be a series of brief comments of praise or criticism, but fail to indicate at which level the pupil is working and what they should do to improve. The school generally does not set sufficient simple, achievable yet specific targets for pupils. General targets are set and these can be valuable in certain circumstances, but they have little effect on pupils' performance in individual subjects. The lack of knowledge of pupils' levels by some teachers can have a negative effect on lessons. A mathematics lesson to a very small group of Year 8 pupils was typical of such difficulties; because the teacher was not fully aware of the levels at which each pupil was working at, planning did not allow for their specific learning needs. Therefore, the work was too simple for some pupils and too difficult for others, and their learning was unsatisfactory, overall.
22. In some lessons teachers do not manage pupils effectively and they can become disorderly. An unsatisfactory Year 9 English lesson on 'Macbeth' got off to a bad start when a boisterous entry to the classroom went largely unchecked. Throughout the lesson, pupils worked at their own pace, concentrated only intermittently and talked loudly. Their learning was unsatisfactory. The way that homework is used is inconsistent, but better in Years 10 and 11 than elsewhere. Where it is well used it is a valuable element in consolidating learning and preparing for what is to come next. In other cases it is peremptory and not adapted to the various needs of different groups in the classroom. Too often it is not set at all. Some parents reported that it is inconsistently set between subjects and between different year groups.

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

23. The quality and range of learning opportunities is unsatisfactory overall; in the last inspection it was satisfactory. There have been improvements. Learning opportunities for pupils in Years 10 and 11 have been broadened to meet a wide variety of needs. The provision of extra curricular activities is very good and a strength of the school. However, too little teaching time is allocated to science in Years 10 and 11 and English in Years 8 and 9. The school does not comply with statutory requirements in providing a current sex education policy, provision for ICT, the teaching of careers in Year 9 and an act of daily collective worship. The management of gifted and talented pupils is unsatisfactory. Through the process of school self-evaluation the curriculum co-ordinator has identified many of the areas that need improvement, and is developing a range of options for a new curriculum model.
24. There is a shortage in teaching time for English in Years 8 and 9 and the curriculum in Years 7 to 9 has unsatisfactory breadth and balance. The setting of pupils by ability enables teachers to plan appropriate work more accurately and to target individual groups and deploy extra support as necessary. However, some EAL pupils are disadvantaged when placed in lower sets according to their command of English, which in some cases does not reflect their overall abilities. National Curriculum requirements are not being met as far as pupils' access to ICT is concerned.
25. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory because too little teaching time is allocated to science and pupils do not have their full entitlement to ICT. However, learning opportunities have been widened to include a range of vocational courses as well as GCSE. Pupils study leisure and tourism and business studies as accredited GNVQ courses. The school has introduced a basic skills and access course, ASDAN, for pupils who require an alternative curriculum. This has been particularly successful in keeping such pupils in school and encouraging them to move on to Post-16 education.
26. The curriculum is extended through the increasing use of extra study facilities for all pupils. These include homework clubs, extra ICT sessions on Saturdays, study support programmes and support for language acquisition by both pupils and their parents with EAL. This has a positive effect on learning and the improved relationship the school is achieving with parents.
27. The arrangements for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE) are satisfactory and improving. It is in a process of development from a very low base. New schemes of work have been recently put into place covering a variety of issues and topics appropriate to the needs of the pupils. PSHE is taught as a discrete subject across the school in tutor groups delivered by the class tutor. The teaching is underpinned by the use of visitors from outside agencies, including drugs awareness groups, magistrates and the Black Police Association. The new citizenship national guidelines are implemented as part of the PSHE syllabus, but taught across all subjects.
28. The provision of careers teaching is unsatisfactory overall, because it is not available to pupils in Year 9, which is a National Curriculum requirement. However, the newly appointed careers co-ordinator has been energetic in ensuring that provision is improved and the department is making progress. It is included as part of PSHE and not taught as a discrete subject in Years 10 and 11. All Year 9 pupils have a careers interview prior to making choices for their options in Year 10. Provision for work experience for all Year 10 pupils is good. The school provides good opportunities for Year 11 pupils to visit careers fairs and access information for opportunities when they leave school. The local Connexions officer is a regular visitor to the school to ensure

that more vulnerable pupils are supported in their career choices, particularly those with poor attendance.

29. The school receives additional funding under the 'Excellence in Cities' scheme. The money is being used to fund a learning support unit, the work of learning mentors and initiatives to support the learning of gifted and talented pupils. This unit is designed to help pupils who have received all the school's normal support procedures, but who are still having problems coping with a classroom situation. The unit's referral procedures have developed well and teachers keep detailed records of pupils' progress in the unit. There are positive signs of improving attitudes among individual pupils who are being gradually reintroduced to mainstream lessons. Although the school provides an improving range of extra study arrangements for all pupils who want to access them, the management of the provision for pupils who are gifted and talented is unsatisfactory. The criteria for their identification are not clear. It is also unclear as to how distinctions are made between higher attaining pupils and those recognised as gifted and talented. There is no tracking system to assess the progress of this particular group and the overall effectiveness of the initiative. However, individual departments, including English and art and design, are very effective in their support of talented pupils.
30. A number of subjects have developed literacy policies and all teachers work to ensure that these policies work. Thus, there are examples of good practice in many departments. Teachers in design and technology, music and physical education emphasise the correct use of technical language. The development and implementation of a whole-school policy to develop pupils' numeracy skills are unsatisfactory. There has been too little training for non-mathematicians in this area. As a result, there is too little development and use of numeracy skills across the range of subjects
31. The provision of equal opportunities is unsatisfactory because the assessment of EAL pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 does not ensure that they are always appropriately placed. The school is also not accessible to those in wheelchairs, above the ground floor. However, the school takes good care that vulnerable pupils are well supported and can access the curriculum. The effective use of individual learning mentors, the provision of the learning support unit, a full range of support agencies and the inclusion of a full-time police officer support inclusion and opportunities, particularly for older pupils who might otherwise truant or become disaffected.
32. The local community makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' learning. The school has identified such links as an area for improvement. There are increasing links with feeder schools, in spite of their number. Liaison with primary school special educational needs co-ordinators helps forward planning for these pupils. There are good links with local sixth forms and colleges both within and outside the borough. The physical education department has recently made contact with a local rugby club and organises inter-school basketball.
33. The range of extra-curricular activities is very good. The school offers many activities including art, drama, music and sport. Very good use is made of the capital's facilities. Pupils visited the Tower of London, and the Imperial War Museum for the Holocaust exhibition, as part of their history studies. The art and design department has very good links with Tate Britain where pupils access courses at weekends and holiday times. The Roundhouse Theatre supports a whole-school music project. Seventy pupils in the school are learning to play a musical instrument. The school provides a retreat facility, which is well supported by pupils. While there are many day visits, residential

experiences for pupils are more limited. This situation is recognised by the school and improvements are planned as part of its future development.

34. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils' spiritual development is cultivated by the ethos of the school. Pupils of all faiths are encouraged to experience the spirituality of the Catholic Mass, while being encouraged to develop tolerance and respect for faiths other than their own.
35. There is a strong emphasis placed on knowing the difference between right and wrong, and strong ethical principles are developed through the provision of religious education and personal, social and health education. Pupils respect authority. They are encouraged to express moral values and consider issues such as personal rights and responsibilities. There is a strong sense of community in the school and pupils are encouraged to take on responsibilities for others within the school community.
36. Pupils are encouraged to engage in activities in support of various charities and this promotes a wider sense of moral and social responsibility. An example is the decision of the student council to adopt the 'Blue Peter Water Appeal' to support a clean water programme in Nigeria. This has promoted some discussion of the key social and moral issues around the subject of clean water.
37. Pupils are encouraged to take part in a range of cultural activities, some of which celebrate the multicultural nature of the school. There have been recent celebrations of black history and culture involving both the art and design and history departments. An art project was organised in collaboration with the Tate Gallery, and a dance competition and theatre visits were organised by English and drama staff. In addition, there are cultural opportunities, such as those enabling pupils to participate in musical activities at lunchtime and at the end of the school day.
38. The improvement in the provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development since the previous inspection is good. The school ethos is strong and continues to improve. The school has a strong sense of Catholicity and a positive ethos for learning. Pupils are encouraged in their learning because the school recognises and rewards effort and achievement.

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

39. The procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare are currently unsatisfactory, as the school does not have an up-to-date health and safety policy in place. In addition, although the local authority carries out whole-school risk assessments, specific departments such as art and design, design and technology, physical education and science do not undertake their own regular risk assessment checks. The site manager, accompanied by a governor, does regular monthly site checks and he also ensures that frequent fire drills, and electrical and fire equipment tests take place. Procedures for dealing with accidents or illnesses are satisfactory. However, there is no master list of pupils' individual medical needs available to staff.
40. The school's policy and procedures for child protection are satisfactory and the designated co-ordinator has been formally trained in child protection matters. However, there is a need for another member of senior staff to have the necessary multiagency training required to deal with such matters due to the relatively high number of pupils concerned. The school does not yet have a policy for the physical restraint of pupils.

41. The educational and personal support and guidance for pupils is satisfactory overall, with some very strong features.
42. There are very good procedures to monitor and promote attendance and the school has been successful in raising attendance levels to the national average. The electronic registration system is used effectively to monitor individual, form and year group attendance. The welfare assistant contacts parents on the first day a pupil is absent and she also follows up any concerns about absence or punctuality. The school makes very good use of members of staff who speak other languages on such occasions. There are very clear procedures to pursue absentees with letters being sent home, parents called into school to discuss the matter and finally the involvement of the educational welfare officer who is located in the school full time. Pupils who arrive late on a regular basis are given detention and again parents are contacted if the problem persists. Good attendance is promoted through the use of certificates and form awards. A notice board in the entrance hall promotes good attendance by highlighting pupils who have excellent attendance.
43. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are also very good. As a result, the school has been very successful at eliminating oppressive behaviour. The school's involvement in the local education authority's behaviour improvement programme has been beneficial in developing a whole-school approach to promoting good behaviour, supporting pupils with challenging behaviour through working with outside agencies as well as other schools. Incidents of bad behaviour are recorded so that all staff concerned are aware of any patterns emerging. Pupils who are considered to need extra support are put on report either by the form tutor, the head of year, or the deputy headteacher. Pupils are very aware of these sanctions, but are also eager to collect merits for good behaviour. These lead to the award of certificates in a weekly assembly. The majority of teaching staff apply the school's behaviour policy successfully and consistently. The school monitors oppressive behaviour very well and records specific incidents appropriately. The police officer who is permanently on site has played a very important part in promoting good behaviour. In addition, the many staff, particularly those from the senior management team, who are on the playground at break times has proved to be very effective in improving standards of behaviour.
44. There are satisfactory procedures for monitoring and promoting pupils' personal development. The school does not yet have a system to record the personal development of all pupils. However, much information is passed amongst staff through the regular pastoral meetings that are held to discuss the very many pupils who receive additional personal support. The school has been very effective in involving a variety of outside agencies, as well as using their own support network such as the learning support unit, to provide the necessary back-up for pupils who have behavioural, social or personal problems. This has had a positive effect on attendance, behaviour and relationships.

## **Assessment**

45. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainments and progress are unsatisfactory, although there are elements of good practice. Data about standards of pupils' attainment figures on entry to the school and at other important stages of their school career are not fully evaluated by the school with respect to different groupings of pupils. The school uses established systems to carry out its own internal assessment and plan the setting arrangements across the subjects. However, these assessments can militate against pupils who arrive with very limited use of English, but who may have considerable ability in many subject areas. The school does not use a sufficient range

of assessment methods before placing these pupils, particularly for the substantial number of pupils who arrive at the school after the usual joining date.

46. There is currently no school assessment policy, apart from guidance on using the current five-point effort and achievement grades when marking work or carrying out periodic assessments. Half-termly unit tests occur in some subjects, but only a few have linked any assessments to National Curriculum Levels; for instance, science, mathematics, design and technology, music and physical education. In many cases pupils are not clear about their current levels and these are rarely included in school reports. Links with National Curriculum Levels and GCSE grades are not reflected in the achievement grades used by all subjects in their assessments. Moderation of assessed work has started in a few subjects, but is not common. There is no computerised system for recording all assessment data.
47. Assessment procedures neither produce sufficient information to set specific targets for pupils' individual improvement, nor in most subjects to inform curricular planning. Each pupil has a small target book to address attendance, uniform, citizenship and the effort and achievement grades. This record does not have space for the detail necessary to enable significant changes in academic performance to result. Target reviews take place with tutors at the end of the school year, but without any action planning or follow-up session afterwards to check progress. Departments do not set subject-specific targets in their marking and marking does not indicate what pupils have to do to get a better level or grade.
48. The individual education plans of some pupils with SEN contain good examples of specific and measurable targets, but these do not link closely with subject assessments beyond literacy and numeracy. Pupils who speak EAL and those with SEN would benefit in particular from using short-term targets across their subjects. The academic mentoring scheme for a group of Year 11 pupils, using an external consultant, has proved valuable in helping those pupils focus on three targets at a time, over relatively short periods. These often involve the completion of coursework.

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

49. A very small number of parents returned the pre-inspection questionnaire and relatively few attended the parents' meeting. However, those who did had favourable views of the school. Parents were particularly positive about how much their children enjoy coming to school, how approachable the school is, the standard of teaching and the high expectations. Inspection evidence supports all these views, although on occasions, the expectations of what gifted and talented pupils can achieve are not high enough. A very small number of parents had concerns about the amount of homework given. Although, overall, inspectors judge homework to be satisfactory, there is some inconsistency in the quantity and quality of the work given as well as how homework is regarded by some teaching staff. Inspectors do not agree with the parents who felt that the school did not provide an interesting range of activities outside school. The extra-curricular activities are considered to be very good and, in addition to the many, varied clubs available, pupils also have the opportunity to participate in educational visits such as the geography field trip to Chorley Wood.
50. The aspect of the school that had the highest level of parental concern was how well parents are kept informed about their child's progress. Inspection evidence confirms this, as the annual pupil progress report is unsatisfactory. There is often too little information about a pupil's progress in a subject and confusing grades and levels are used, with no explanation. If test results are given, the class or year average is not

recorded so the parent does not have any benchmark to assess progress. Targets are not consistently useful or specific to subjects. Parents have one consultation evening annually, where they receive the written report, although staff are approachable should any concerns arise throughout the term.

51. There are regular school newsletters for parents that are informative and user-friendly. Staff in the school speak a wide range of the community languages and efforts are made to ensure that parents for whom English is an additional language, are kept well informed. The school's prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents both have several statutory items missing. For example, the prospectus does not include the parents' right to withdraw their child from collective worship and religious education and the governors' report does not contain a financial statement or the school's Key Stage 3 targets.
52. The present senior management team in the school has done much to foster more effective links with parents, which are currently satisfactory. For example, the first steps have been taken to establish a parent teacher association and English lessons have been arranged for parents who wish to improve their language skills. The school takes parents' views into account via the use of questionnaires and feedback forms; for example, after parents' consultation evenings. Two parent liaison officers now work in the school and this has had a positive impact on the links with parents and how they perceive the school. As a result, the impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school and the contribution they make to their children's learning are satisfactory. A good example of how parents are becoming more actively involved is the high number who, with the parent liaison officer, organised and ran an end-of-term party for the Year 7 pupils at Christmas. Some parents are also involved in a lunchtime knitting and sewing club.

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

53. The quality of leadership provided by the headteacher, senior management team and governing body is very good. Their shared vision for the future provides a clear educational direction for the school, which has enabled it to begin to raise standards, retain and recruit staff to meet the requirements of National Curriculum and provide an appropriate range of optional courses for pupils in Years 10 and 11. This vision extends to an expansion of the school, a reduction of the current budget deficit and the development of a centre of excellence for pupils for whom English is an additional language. The headteacher, senior managers and Chair of Governors lead by example; they provide a visible presence in and around the school to the extent that they are missed by pupils when they are absent. They have established effective procedures to direct the work of pupils and teachers and these have clearly played a part in improved behaviour, rising standards and the enthusiasm pupils show for their school. They know the strengths and weaknesses of the school well, have effectively prioritised developments since taking office and plan appropriately for the future.
54. Middle managers, many of whom are recently appointed, are gradually gaining the depth of experience required to fully undertake their now clearly defined responsibilities. In several departments - English, modern foreign languages, music, science and art and design - management is good. Throughout the school, managers are beginning to assume the mantle of leadership through competent development planning, effective handbooks and a knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the areas for which they are responsible. This represents an improvement on the position reported at the last inspection.

55. Since the previous inspection the school and its middle managers have had to develop new systems of management that, although now in place, are not yet fully effective. In particular, procedures to assess and monitor the attainment and progress of pupils and to monitor the work of teachers through performance management are not fully operative and do not provide information that will inform future planning or development. Job descriptions are not fully in place for all staff, and where they are, are often generic rather than personalised to the holder of the post. Formal methods of communication that keep staff fully informed, through appropriate briefings or meetings, are good and support is being provided to assist all managers to be more effective. The quality of management is, therefore, satisfactory and improving.
56. Provision for pupils with SEN is satisfactory. The SEN co-ordinator is taking appropriate action to improve the department. Statutory requirements for annual reviews of statements are followed and parents are fully involved in the setting of individual education plan targets. Good liaison is maintained with external agencies. However, the heads of subject departments do not always reflect a knowledge and understanding of SEN in their subject policies and schemes of work. Modification of tasks to suit individual levels of attainment in the classroom is often inconsistent, although there is evidence of its effective use in some subjects.
57. Systems of financial control are satisfactory, although the concerns raised in the recent school audit have yet to be addressed. In particular these relate to the segregation of duties, arrangements for the use of petty cash and formal documentation of levels of financial delegation agreed by the governing body. Expenditure is efficiently monitored and all parties with financial responsibility, including the finance and premises committee of the governors, are kept regularly informed about levels of spending even though the school has no delegated responsibility for the annual budget. Administrative arrangements and procedures provided by the school office are sound and help staff to concentrate on their role to teach and support pupils.
58. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities through a series of committees. Through its officers it is a good critical friend to the school. It shares the vision of the headteacher and knows the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Recently it has taken steps to more actively monitor the work of the school through the appointment of link governors for aspects of the work of the school; for example, for SEN and work to support EAL pupils. Vacancies on the governing body, however, have not allowed this monitoring to be extended to subject departments. School representatives attend and report to the various committees and governors are appropriately involved in school development planning and initial considerations of the budget. There is regular contact between the headteacher and the Chair of Governors. As a result, governors exercise a more prominent role in holding the school to account than at the time of the previous inspection.
59. However, the governors are still failing to exercise their responsibilities in relation to several statutory requirements mentioned here or elsewhere in this report. In particular, information provided for parents in the school prospectus and annual report of the governors in respect of external tests and examinations does not make comparisons with local or national performance. The prospectus does not inform parents of their right to withdraw their children from religious education or collective worship or how the school will ensure that pupils with disabilities are not disadvantaged. Policies for sex education and collective worship have not been approved. The governors' annual report does not contain information about the budget or targets set for pupils at the age of 14 years. Performance management arrangements are not fully in place and pupils do not receive their full entitlement to ICT across the curriculum.



60. Staffing is satisfactory. Over the last two years, 30 staff have left the school and 36 have joined. Although this represents a considerable turnover of staff, the situation is now stabilised and the needs of the curriculum are met by a capable and committed team of teachers.
61. All staff are on permanent contracts and, for the first time in many years, recruitment and retention are strong features of the school. The staffing profile reflects three newly qualified teachers and 14 overseas teachers who do not have UK qualified teacher status. Newly qualified teachers follow an induction programme and their work is systematically and effectively supported. The recruitment of overseas staff has enriched the school community. The wide variety of ethnic groups within the pupil population is reflected to a lesser extent amongst the teachers. Many overseas teachers are being supported by the school in gaining a recognised UK teaching qualification. Many of these staff are developing a better understanding of the National Curriculum. The school no longer has to rely heavily on supply teachers, which was a factor contributing to a lack of stability, consistency and continuity.
62. The co-ordination of all matters relating to staffing; for example, performance management, is becoming more effective through clearer management structures and line management focus. The provision for the professional development of staff is sound. However, many staff have not participated in performance management, as the process has only just started. The important contribution of the support, administrative and maintenance staff is recognised and valued. The school benefits greatly from the support of a wide variety of staff from external organisations who work in partnership with the school to the benefit of staff and pupils alike. Their contribution is also recognised and valued.
63. Accommodation is satisfactory for the needs of the school. There are sufficient classrooms for most subjects to have their own specialist rooms. The lack of appropriately soundproofed music practice rooms causes a significant nuisance to some other curriculum areas. Access to some office space is through the drama studio and this is unsatisfactory because drama lessons are regularly interrupted. The outdoor physical education space has an uneven surface that is potentially dangerous in inclement weather. This has a negative effect on delivery of the physical education curriculum. The school is used well at lunchtimes for activities and clubs. The library is bright and well used. The site supervisor ensures that the premises are well maintained. His vigilance and commitment keep the site graffiti and litter free.
64. The overall provision of resources is satisfactory. Although funding for resources has been restricted recently, careful expenditure has ensured that the general position does not have an unduly detrimental impact on learning resources. However, there are variations across departments. Music has a good supply of instruments and computers. There are weaknesses in a number of subjects. Many of them have insufficient access to computers to allow them to include ICT regularly within lessons. The art and design department does not have a kiln. Some geography resources are dated. History does not have any artefacts. In modern foreign languages there are insufficient textbooks available for pupils' use outside lessons.
65. The school is more generously resourced than many similar schools and is benefiting from the support of the local education authority in ensuring that the current large, inherited financial deficit is not allowed to restrain the redevelopment of the school. Funding has been wisely used to ensure that staff are recruited and retained to provide an appropriate curriculum and to meet the needs of large proportion of EAL and SEN

pupils on the school's roll. Additional specific funding is used effectively to meet the needs of those for whom it is intended and to provide support for teachers in their work in the classroom to raise standards and promote the personal development of pupils. Best value is sought for all expenditure, but the school is not in a position to reduce the rising debt, although it has plans to set a balanced budget in two years' time and to begin to reduce the debt thereafter.

66. Through the quality of leadership the school has made significant improvements in management procedures since the last inspection. Levels of pupil attainment are rising, behaviour is much improved, there is a stable, full-time staff and governors are taking more responsibility for holding the school to account. In particular, the quality of leadership of the headteacher and senior managers, supported by officers of the governing body, have been the main driving force in improving the quality of learning and providing a platform from which the school can continue to move forward.

## **Inclusion**

67. St George's is smaller than average with a predominance of boys. This is now beginning to even out. A factor affecting the intake is that there are two girls' schools in the area and some parents prefer that option. The school is very much multiethnic, with over two-thirds of the pupils of ethnic minority origin. Over one quarter are refugees. A large number of pupils join or leave the school in any one year. This mobility makes continuity for some pupils difficult and adds to the pressures on the staff. The main languages are English, Arabic, Spanish, Portuguese and French, but there are 53 languages in total. A high proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language, with many at an early stage of learning English. The number of pupils with special educational needs is high compared to the national average. Attendance is broadly in line with the national average and to date there have been no permanent exclusions in the current academic year. The learning support unit is an asset to the school. Pupils in the unit are often engrossed in their work. They are able to work independently, with individual help always to hand and they value the environment, which is conducive to learning. Pupils with behavioural difficulties attend the unit twice per week for six weeks and plans are made to allow them to reintegrate. The learning support unit team meets regularly and comprises heads of year, home liaison and representatives of the Malborough family service and Catholic counselling service. The outside agency, Connexions, works with pupils who have barriers to achievement and provides inside school and wider professional support.
68. A total of 122 pupils are being supported by counselling. There is support for SEN, behavioural problems, EAL and a literacy group. Good use is made of extra funding available. This generally comes in the form of LEA or Home Office grants.
69. A strategy to help raise standards and ensure that pupils have the chance to reach their potential is to test new entrants in their own language as far as is possible to assess their capabilities. There are teachers on the staff who can communicate in other languages. Pupils who arrive at school with very little English are proud of the fact that they have picked up the language. In some instances, pupils talk together in their own language and act as 'buddies'. Parents have the opportunity to attend English classes after school. Drop-in coffee mornings are in the planning stage as a means of welcoming parents who are new to the area or country, so that they will feel they have a place to visit and become part of the community. School is very sensitive to home circumstances. Pupils voiced a sense of security and feeling safe in school and to many it was their main interest. Many would like a sixth form, as they feel that this is their school.

70. Citizenship has been introduced into the curriculum. This is already showing positive results as pupils take on responsibilities. They feel valued as individuals, which raises self-esteem. Most forms have a daily prayer and other religions are respected. Some GNVQ and college based courses have been introduced as alternatives to the GCSE courses. Although school has done a value added analysis, it is not as yet in such fine detail as to include breakdown by ethnicity.
71. The school's values embrace inclusion and these are reflected in the ethos, the curriculum, resources, personal relations, communication, the interaction of staff and pupils, leadership and staff behaviour.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

72. St George's school has made significant improvements since the major changes to its management in September 2001. The pace of change has been very good. In order to achieve this the school has had to prioritise what it has undertaken. To sustain and build on these improvements the school should now:
- 1) develop and implement a whole-school numeracy policy to promote the development of this skill in all subjects of the curriculum;  
(paragraphs 38, 95, 96)
  - 2) ensure that the curriculum for ICT is effectively managed so that it meets all elements of the National Curriculum both within the taught subject and more broadly, as delivered by other subjects;  
(paragraphs 25, 83, 94, 104, 142-150)
  - 3) develop a thorough school assessment policy to provide regular, accurate and accessible information about what pupils know and can do. Use this information to ensure that all pupils are in appropriate teaching groups and that all pupils have easily understood and helpful targets;  
(paragraphs 45-47)
  - 4) ensure that teachers are sufficiently aware of girls' underachievement;  
(paragraph 2)
  - 5) ensure that teachers are sufficiently aware of the lack of challenge for gifted and talented pupils. Develop teaching strategies to address both these issues and assess pupils' achievement so that the effectiveness of these strategies can be understood.  
(paragraphs 21, 29)

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

73. Provision for pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) is satisfactory overall. Although there are a number of strengths, a significant number of areas exist where improvement must continue. The school has rightly identified the needs of EAL pupils as a priority for development. Following the audit and review undertaken by the local education authority adviser, a clear and appropriate action plan has been put into place. Its implementation since the beginning of this term is impressive and indicates good future progress. Nevertheless, recent developments have yet to have an effect on improved standards across the school. Since over one half of the pupils in the school have English as a second or third language, the success of the action plan is important if the school wishes to raise examination results from their current well below average level. The appointment of a very experienced head of department at a senior level reflects strongly the school's high commitment to this area of its work.
74. Observations in lessons and discussions with pupils and staff indicate that EAL pupils' achievement is at least equivalent to that of their peers and often good. The very positive attitudes most pupils bring to their studies and their commitment to succeed contribute significantly to the best achievement. Achievement is better in Years 10 and 11 for able pupils who have acquired good language skills and in Years 7 to 9 for higher attaining pupils placed in appropriate ability groups. Achievement is unsatisfactory for some able pupils who are placed in the lower band in Years 7 to 9, where the work is insufficiently demanding. As a result, EAL pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. Some EAL pupils achieve very well in public examinations and the school can illustrate this with specific examples. However, it does not yet analyse results sufficiently to identify how well these pupils achieve overall, in comparison to other pupils and where future priorities need to be targeted.
75. Teaching and learning for EAL pupils is satisfactory overall. The specialist EAL teachers provide good support in lessons and liaison work with departments is developing well. The role of the EAL teachers is now proactive, time is used more effectively and efficiently and clear areas of responsibility such as working with specific year groups or subject areas have been identified. In English, joint planning of lessons takes place, such as for work on 'Macbeth' in Year 9. Withdrawal sessions for beginners not only support the development of pupils' skills in speaking, reading and writing English, but also the topics covered in English, mathematics and science lessons. A withdrawal session for Year 8 art pupils provided very good opportunities for pupils to develop their language skills as well developing their skills in art. Training and ongoing weekly tutorials from the LEA help the EAL teachers to plan their work for the withdrawal sessions and to target more effectively their in-class support.
76. The quality of learning of EAL pupils is less consistent when there is no additional classroom support. It ranges from good to unsatisfactory. Whilst teachers are supportive of EAL pupils and often aware of their needs, the learning experiences provided are not always appropriate. Departments have yet to develop appropriate teaching materials to ensure the best possible access for EAL pupils to the curriculum. The science department has begun this process and, in mathematics, bilingual mathematical dictionaries are in place for the main non-English languages spoken by pupils. The grouping system in Years 7 to 9 results in pupils with a wide range of learning needs in the lower-attaining sets. These groups include pupils with learning difficulties, EAL pupils at the early stages of learning English who range from those with little previous education to those who have achieved well in their first language, and pupils with weaknesses in reading and writing in their first language of English. Where

high attaining EAL beginners are in the upper sets, good teaching significantly contributes to good progress in learning. For example, in a Year 9 top English group studying 'Macbeth', EAL pupils were able to discuss the language to be used in a doctor's report on one of the characters, Duncan, with confidence. They used accurately and with understanding words such as 'diagnosis', 'symptom' and 'treatment'. In other lessons pupils can appear to complete worksheets successfully, but when questioned show little understanding of what they have done.

77. The induction programme for EAL pupils is managed well. Interviews and testing, which appropriately involves parents, helps the EAL pupils to settle into the school quickly. The range of languages spoken by the EAL teachers and other staff in the school significantly helps this process. The school is also able to call upon support from the local education authority central service, where the school is unable to provide appropriate support for pupils with very little or no English. EAL teachers attend parents' evenings and provide valuable support for teachers because of the range of languages they speak. A weakness in the induction process lies in the procedures for the testing of pupils in their first language to ensure they are placed in the most appropriate teaching group. This is now developing in English, mathematics and science. Pupils' progress is assessed twice yearly, but this process and target setting for pupils are not rigorous enough.
78. The commitment of the EAL teachers is high and pupils benefit from the personal support and attention they receive. The school lacks an appropriate base for small group work and to provide a supportive area outside lesson times for new and insecure pupils. The room currently available for small group work is a long way from the small EAL office, is too large and is principally used by the SEN department. The management of work in EAL, because of staff changes, has suffered from a lack of clear leadership until recently. It will be improved after Easter when a new permanent management structure will be in place. Significant progress in the work of the EAL department has been made in recent months.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	107
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	56

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
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#### Years 7 – 11

Number	4	20	40	39	4	0	0
Percentage	3	19	38	37	3	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting the percentages for the sixth form as each lesson represents more than seven percentage points.

### *Information about the school's pupils*

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	578
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	247

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	13
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	152

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	374

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	47
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	53

### Attendance

Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence
%	%

School data	6.2
National comparative data	7.8

School data	3.1
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)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2002	59	57	116

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	10	24	25
	Girls	18	23	22
	Total	28	47	47
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	24 (29)	41 (47)	41 (33)
	National	66 (64)	67 (66)	66 (66)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	5 (12)	17 (21)	15 (15)
	National	32 (31)	45 (43)	33 (34)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	19	24	24
	Girls	24	23	19
	Total	43	47	43
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	37 (41)	40 (45)	37 (25)
	National	67 (65)	70 (68)	67 (64)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	17 (16)	16 (18)	21 (5)
	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)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	2002	63	55	118

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	13	50	58
	Girls	10	37	44
	Total	23	87	102
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	19 (14)	74 (76)	86 (93)
	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	25.1
	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
74	24	0
12	1	0
84	0	0
8	2	0
3	0	0
0	0	0
7	0	0
7	0	0
3	1	0
6	0	0
8	3	0
82	29	1
106	12	0
30	1	0
3	0	0
142	13	1
4	1	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)	33.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17

### Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	18
Total aggregate hours worked per week	576

## Financial information

Financial year	2002-03
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	£
Total income	2,650,566
Total expenditure	2,826,406

**Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11**

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	74.4
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**Average teaching group size: Y7– Y11**

Key Stage 3	25.2
Key Stage 4	19.7

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

Expenditure per pupil	5,384
Balance brought forward from previous year	-505,560
Balance carried forward to next year	-681,400

**Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	21
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	30

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
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)	1

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*



## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	570
Number of questionnaires returned	39

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	63	37	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	41	41	5	0	13
Behaviour in the school is good.	39	49	2	1	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	39	30	9	13	9
The teaching is good.	50	40	5	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	50	24	19	5	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	64	36	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	82	8	8	2	0
The school works closely with parents.	59	23	15	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	58	28	3	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	57	29	3	0	11
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	33	46	13	0	3

## PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

### ENGLISH

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

#### Strengths

- Teachers manage lessons well so that pupils are encouraged to improve the standards of their work.
- The teaching of basic skills of literacy is good.
- Teaching and learning are formally monitored so that teachers and pupils receive guidance on how to improve.

#### Areas for improvement

- Teachers' marking does not give pupils enough guidance on how to improve their work.
- Pupils' targets for improvement are unrelated to National Curriculum Levels.
- Strategies to improve pupils' writing.

80. In the 2002 GCSE English language and literature examinations, fewer than three out of ten pupils attained the higher grades of A\*-C. This was very low compared with the national average. Girls' attainment in GCSE English language and literature examinations is higher than that of boys. Pupils did slightly better in English language than they did in several other subjects. Pupils' very low attainment in the end of Year 9 national tests and GCSE examinations was partly because their opportunities for learning were restricted by the school's circumstances and the rapid turnover of staff. Pupils perform less well when writing in national tests and GCSE examinations than in lessons. This is because their writing in lessons is supported by teachers and teaching assistants. National test results for pupils at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were very low and in the bottom five per cent, nationally. The performance of girls in the Year 9 national test results has been consistently better than that of boys. In order to improve the performance of boys, the department has used a range of strategies including short-term targets and boy-friendly tasks. Between Years 2000 and 2002 the trend has been for the performance of girls to fall further below the national average than that of boys. The department is planning changes to the schemes of work to halt this decline in the performance of girls.

81. Although standards of work in Years 10 and 11 are below national expectations, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. In Years 10 and 11, standards of speaking and listening are above average. Pupils' spoken answers frequently show good understanding of the texts studied and they use technical terms accurately in discussions of literature and drama. Teachers encourage pupils to express themselves well and support their answers with reference to the text. For example, a Year 11 group studying 'Hearts and Partners' poetry was able to identify and discuss the key features of poems. Higher-attaining pupils are not encouraged to develop their understanding of literature sufficiently by analysing and discussing such things as alternative interpretations, ambiguity and allusion. Pupils read effectively from set texts and understand ways in which meaning is conveyed. Many pupils write in a range of forms for a variety of purposes. Higher-attaining pupils suit the style of their writing to their purpose.

82. By the end of Year 9, pupils make satisfactory progress in speaking and listening. They listen attentively and answer questions with well-constructed answers. Oral work in many lessons contains a large proportion of teacher-directed question and answer sessions where pupils' enthusiasm to answer usually ensures a brisk pace. The best lessons offered pupils opportunities to investigate ideas together in groups, often with a responsibility to report back to the whole class. For example, a Year 9 class preparing to write a doctor's report on Lady Macbeth showed good listening and speaking skills, building on one another's contributions in a series of well-structured responses. One boy was able to explain that Lady Macbeth did not need a family doctor, but a psychiatrist or a priest. At the end of Year 9 many pupils are confident readers. All pupils read aloud as part of their regular learning routine. Higher-attaining pupils read with fluency and expression. Pupils often cope less well when writing than when speaking and listening, or reading. Higher-attaining pupils use imaginative vocabulary in their writing. Lower-attaining pupils write well enough to be understood, although they do not use full stops, capital letters and question marks correctly.
83. Teaching and learning are very good overall. Two excellent lessons were observed where very good planning, well-chosen activities and very good management enabled all pupils to learn effectively. The basic skills of literacy are taught well, but ICT is not used effectively for drafting and redrafting work. Teachers manage lessons well. Although the assessment of pupils' work helps teachers to plan further lessons, few pupils receive sufficient advice on what they have done well and how to improve their work. Targets are not linked to National Curriculum Levels so that pupils are unaware of the levels at which they are working. Pupils with SEN make satisfactory progress because the teaching of basic skills is good. Gifted and talented pupils make unsatisfactory progress because teachers do not always provide additional intellectual challenge and support to help them to obtain better Key Stage 3 test results and higher grades in their GCSE examinations.
84. Leadership and management of the department are good. Several improvements have recently been made. Departmental policy documents are clear and focused on raising pupils' attainment. Teaching and learning are formally monitored to provide guidance on how to improve. Schemes of work are being further developed to indicate the teaching and learning styles to be adopted, how work can be presented for different groups of children, the resources to be used, the range of work to be assessed and methods of assessment to be used, and provision for whole-school issues such as citizenship or spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Overall, there has been satisfactory progress since the previous inspection.

## **Drama**

85. Overall, provision for drama is good. Standards achieved in Years 8 and 9 are in line with expectations for pupils at that age. In Years 10 and 11 standards are above national expectations. Teaching in the lessons sampled was very good. There was one unsatisfactory lesson in which the teaching was characterised by an inability to manage pupils well. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan lessons well. Pupils enjoy drama lessons and work hard. Drama teachers are good role models because they show commitment, respect and application.
86. Drama makes a very good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of pupils. Pupils enthusiastically explore issues, characters and situations, both individually and in groups and evaluate together what they have achieved. There are no drama lessons in Year 7.

## Literacy

87. Whilst there is no whole-school strategy for teaching the basic skills of literacy, some departments have developed literacy policies and teachers recognise their role in making these policies work. There are examples of good practice in many departments. Teachers in design and technology, music and physical education emphasise the correct use of technical language. Modern foreign language teachers highlight the application of correct grammatical structures. Simple guidelines are provided in art and design, geography and history to help pupils to construct appropriate written work. Empathetic writing is encouraged in geography where pupils write letters and poems. Overall, the level of competence is in line with expectations throughout the school.

## MATHEMATICS

88. The quality of provision in mathematics is **satisfactory** overall.

### Strengths

- The head of department provides good leadership and has made good progress in improving the department in the last three years.
- The good subject knowledge of teachers and lessons that have clear learning objectives. The interactive white board is effectively employed to enhance teaching.
- Improvements are being made in recording pupils' attainment and progress.

### Areas for improvement

- Pupils' numeracy skills are low and strategies to develop them in all subjects are unsatisfactory.
- There is no strategy to ensure that extended staff absence does not hinder pupils' progress.
- Pupils' lack knowledge of how well they are doing and how to improve.
- Teaching materials to meet the wide range of learning needs of pupils in the lowest sets are unsatisfactory, especially in Years 7 to 9.

89. GCSE attainment in the last three years has been below that nationally. However, figures are affected adversely by the comparatively high number of pupils entering the school in Years 10 and 11. Most have English as an additional language, some are refugees and sometimes previous schooling has been infrequent. Nevertheless, GCSE results are improving and in 2002, although still significantly below the national average, the proportion of pupils gaining A\*-C grades rose. It was broadly in line with that of similar schools and represents satisfactory achievement for these pupils throughout Years 10 and 11. In GCSE examinations in 2002 pupils did much better in mathematics than most other subjects.
90. For the last three years performance in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 has been well below that nationally, although close to that for similar schools. The overall trend of improvement has been in line with that nationally and again represents satisfactory achievement. Year 2002 National Curriculum test results show better achievement in mathematics than in other subjects. Results in national tests and examinations show that boys perform slightly better than girls. This is against the national trend, although the girls perform as well as boys at the higher GCSE levels.

91. Pupils' current standards in Year 11 are better than those achieved in national examinations in summers 2001 and 2002. However, standards are below those expected nationally. Given the pupils' well below average attainment on entry to the school, the high number of pupils with English as an additional language and the significant number of pupils who enter the school throughout the year, this represents satisfactory achievement and, for some groups of pupils, good achievement. A significant factor in the good progress pupils make is the very positive attitudes most bring to their studies. Pupils in the top set in Year 11 are on course to achieve the nationally expected levels at GCSE in summer 2003. The highest-attaining pupils have completed a good quantity of work at the highest levels. They can solve quadratic equations successfully and can use trigonometric formulae to solve problems. These pupils are achieving well. For pupils in the next two groups progress is at least satisfactory, although standards are below nationally expected levels. In the two lowest sets, achievement is unsatisfactory because of extended staff absence.
92. Currently, the overall attainment of pupils in Year 9 is well below average. Higher attaining pupils have a good grasp of the relevant algebraic techniques required to achieve higher National Curriculum Levels. Work is appropriately matched to their learning needs. Elsewhere, achievement is satisfactory, but more variable and depends on the quality of teaching pupils receive. Where planning meets pupils' learning needs, achievement is good. Where teachers do not structure materials well and do not provide appropriately for pupils with English as an additional language it is satisfactory. This is made more difficult for teachers because a significant number of able pupils at the early stages of learning English are placed in the lower ability band. This adds to the range of learning needs in these groups and too often these pupils receive insufficiently demanding work to help them to make the best possible progress. They do not have access to the technical language and techniques required to achieve as they should, in spite of the efforts of some teachers to provide them with extension work. In Years 7 to 9 pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress, but in Years 10 and 11 it is unsatisfactory because of the interrupted teaching they receive in the bottom sets. Lesson observations indicate that girls do not always participate as well as boys. Teachers do not focus their questioning to ensure their full participation.
93. Teaching is satisfactory, overall. It is better for higher attaining pupils in the top sets than for pupils in the lower sets. This is for a number of reasons. The most significant is the ongoing frequent absence of members of the department whose timetables cover mainly lower-attaining groups. As a result, the pupils in these groups do not receive a regular teaching programme, their learning suffers and progress is unsatisfactory. The best lessons are well structured with learning objectives clearly stated. Teachers are appropriately qualified. Their good subject knowledge and hard work coupled with good expectations of work and behaviour ensure that pupils learn appropriate and accurate mathematical techniques. The mathematics department has two interactive white boards. The use of these for computer presentations of lessons and graph plotting, using appropriate software, is very effective. Instructions and diagrams are clear, pupils take good notes and lessons move at a good pace. Key words are re-visited. This makes it easier to go over the objectives at the end of the lesson to recap on pupils' learning. The clear language teachers use in talking to pupils is helpful for those with learning difficulties and English as an additional language. However, not all lower attaining groups have the opportunity to experience this effective teaching approach. Marking and lessons do not always provide enough feedback to pupils on their mistakes and the completion of homework, and GCSE coursework is not as good as it should be for a significant number of pupils.



94. The head of department provides good leadership. He supports new young staff well. He has developed clear working procedures and a scheme of work that provides a progressive development of mathematical skills and implements both the requirements of the National Numeracy Strategy and the new GCSE courses. The department has made good progress in using computers to record and monitor pupils' progress, although, as yet, insufficient data is available to analyse the performance of different groups. Currently, pupils are not kept sufficiently well informed on how well they are doing, what they are expected to achieve and how to improve. Priorities for further improvement for the department are clear and appropriate. However, management of pupils' learning during continuing staff absence is unsatisfactory. Schemes of work do not indicate specific teaching approaches to support work with lower attaining pupils and those with English as an additional language. Also, whilst it covers National Curriculum requirements for the use of ICT, the department has limited access to computers and so cannot fully meet statutory requirements. Given the lack of documentation, staffing difficulties and the school's previous history, progress has been satisfactory since the last inspection.

## Numeracy

95. Pupils' numeracy skills are too low. In particular, many pupils have difficulty performing simple mental calculations. Such skills are better in Year 7 than for older pupils. This is because insufficient time is given to regular practise to consolidate previous learning. Many pupils in Year 7 have quicker recall of times tables up to ten and a better range of mental calculation strategies than older pupils in the school. Only pupils in the highest mathematics sets have skills close to those expected for their age. In other subjects of the curriculum limited use of numeracy skills was seen during the inspection. Year 8 design and technology pupils measured accurately using millimetres and in modern foreign languages pupils had the opportunity to practise their numeracy skills during work on the Euro. In science, Year 11 pupils constructed graphs reasonably accurately and successfully read off values.
96. The development and implementation of a whole-school policy to develop pupils' numeracy skills are unsatisfactory. Departments have not followed through the initial in-service training day and identified appropriate opportunities in their subject to develop and use numeracy skills systematically in the appropriate context. The only example seen was Year 9 science activities aimed at testing pupils' numeracy skills. Departments have not taken individual responsibility for the implementation of this aspect of the National Numeracy Strategy to improve the standards achieved by 11 to 14-year-olds.

## SCIENCE

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

### Strengths

- Standards are improving at both key stages.
- Overall, the teaching of science is good, lessons are well planned and pupils are well managed. There is increasing emphasis on practical investigations in lessons.
- The head of department shows a dynamic approach to improving the provision, which helps to raise pupils' achievement.
- Some extra teaching materials help EAL and SEN pupils to learn well.

#### Areas for improvement

- The time allocation for the Years 10 and 11 double science course is too low.
- ICT is insufficiently used in teaching and learning.
- Ongoing assessment and target setting systems based on science skills, National Curriculum Levels and GCSE grades are not in place.

98. Attainment in GCSE double science exams at the end of Year 11 in 2002 was well below national averages, but standards have improved since the last inspection and are now broadly in line with results from comparable schools. Girls performed much less well than boys in 2002 and the department is addressing this issue; for instance, by introducing some 'girls only' revision classes in Years 9 and 11. Recent modular tests in Year 10 now show an equal proportion of boys and girls reaching higher grades and a similar gender balance is evident in the recent Year 11 'mock' GCSE exam results.
99. On entry to the school attainment in science is well below national averages. Attainment of pupils in national tests at the end of Year 9 is also well below national averages, but has improved since the last inspection and standards are now above the average for similar schools. Boys and girls achieve similar levels and the proportion of pupils who gained Level 6 or higher is above the average for similar schools.
100. Current standards of attainment in Year 11 are below national expectations, but show that the improvement noted in exams is continuing. However, the low curriculum time allocated to double science makes it difficult for pupils to reach their full potential, although the department is running extra revision lessons in Year 11 (in and out of school) to try to reduce the problem. By the end of Year 11 higher-attaining pupils show clear understanding of scientific processes like the properties of light, the simple rules of genetics and the chemical reactivity series. Lower-attaining pupils follow instructions, make good notes and respond positively, but have more difficulty with evaluations and explanations; for instance, in analysing the part that friction plays in causing static electricity. Pupils with English as an additional language or with special educational needs make good progress when supported by additional staff and are sometimes supported by a 'buddy' system when no support staff are present. These pupils' achievement is satisfactory.
101. Current standards in Year 9 are below the national average, but improving. Pupils are taught in ability sets, so that they can make progress at a suitable pace. Their achievement is satisfactory. However, some pupils who arrive at the school with a limited grasp of the English language are placed in low sets that may not be appropriate for their ability in science. By the end of Year 9 higher-attaining pupils show understanding of the nature of living organisms, including bacteria and viruses, the degree of acidity of a variety of substances and physical phenomena like current electricity and heat transfer. Other pupils produce similar notes on the basic facts, but cannot interpret or explain results and effects so fully. The majority of pupils with English as an additional language or with special educational needs make good progress when supported by additional staff. For instance, one Year 8 pupil has made a rapid improvement in writing skills, after joining the school with very limited knowledge of English. Written skills in general show a marked improvement from Years 7 to 9 for many pupils. Some new data handling activities and extra revision classes for Year 9 pupils (in and out of school) are designed to raise attainment, as are further extension activities for higher-attaining pupils in Years 7 and 8.
102. Teaching is good and no unsatisfactory lessons were seen during the inspection. Lessons are well planned and organised, supported by a system for ordering

equipment, which is operated efficiently by the science technicians. Pupils know the lesson objectives at the start of every lesson. Teachers' expectations are high and pupils are encouraged to work at a good pace, answer a wide range of oral questions and produce well-written notes and summaries. For instance, in a lesson on soil acidity, pupils contributed many ideas on how best to carry out a fair test and how to record the results of the investigation. They were also stimulated by the teacher's imaginative title of the task, 'soil detectives'. In some lessons, the teachers' good subject knowledge enables pupils to learn new ideas quickly. For instance, in a lesson on the variety of life, the teacher helps pupils to gain real insight into what life would be like inside a rainforest or in a desert. In a small number of lessons, incorrect information given to the pupils reduces the extent of their learning. Classroom management and teaching methods are good, keeping pupils on task, with a pleasant rapport in many lessons. Pupils are often involved in class discussion, enhancing the ability to express their ideas clearly. There is a strong emphasis on the key words of the subject, although pupils who find the language of science difficult to remember would benefit from seeing these words on large sized laminated cards. The amount of investigative science has increased since the last inspection. Pupils enjoy practical work in a safe environment, but do not always find it easy to set up apparatus effectively. In some lessons a demonstration introduces the topic effectively, for instance the use of a generator of static electricity. In most lessons the practical work is carried out by pupils themselves.

103. Pupils show a positive attitude to learning in science and behave well, particularly in Years 10 and 11. They enjoy science lessons, concentrate well and pay attention to the teacher. They co-operate well in practical activities.
104. There is insufficient use made of ICT systems and materials to enhance teaching and learning. There is too little data logging, Internet research and the use of science-based CD-ROMs. Pupils use their communication and literacy skills in science lessons and some topics offer opportunities to reinforce their numeracy. Examples seen include the drawing of graphs from a photosynthesis experiment and calculating costs of using electrical appliances.
105. Marking is often thorough, with comments that encourage pupils, but also point out how they can improve, although this is not yet standardised across the department. Although pupils now have regular end-of-unit tests these are not backed up by ongoing assessment of their science skills or of national levels or GCSE grades, so that pupils' short-term gains are not monitored accurately. All pupils, particularly those with special educational needs or English as an additional language, would benefit from target setting and self-assessment in the subject area.
106. The department is well led and managed, with a dynamic approach to raising standards. The quality of teaching and learning has improved since the last inspection, as have exam results. Schemes of work have been brought up to date and new teaching ideas and materials introduced with enthusiasm, some for higher attaining pupils, others for pupils with special educational needs and English as an alternative language. Resources are satisfactory. New textbooks have benefited the pupils' although some practical resources need boosting.

## ART AND DESIGN

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

### Strengths

- Pupils learn well as a result of good teaching.
- Standards are improving because of the introduction of a more structured curriculum that provides an effective framework for learning.
- Clear and explicit expectations of what pupils will learn are helping them to focus their learning in lessons.

### Areas for improvement

- GCSE examination results were very low in 2002.
- Policies and practice with regard to ICT and health and safety are out of date.
- The curriculum does include three-dimensional art.
- Pupils are unfamiliar with National Curriculum Levels in Years 7 to 9, which they need to help them to improve.

108. In the 2002 GCSE examinations the proportion of pupils gaining A\*-C grades was very low compared to the national average. The pupils' performance was lower than the average of their other subjects. However, there are strategies for improvement in place that are beginning to have a positive effect on standards. Progress is being made with the introduction of a new examination syllabus that is more suited to the pupils. In tests at the end of Year 9 pupils' standards were below the national average.

109. The current standard of pupils' work in Year 11 is below the national expectations. In a Year 11 project on Georgia O'Keefe, pupils related their work to examination attainment criteria. There was a clear structure in their work and pupils knew their areas for improvement. Challenge was embodied through experimentation and development of ideas, which helped raise standards. In a Year 10 project on cubism, pupils responded positively to good structure and sequencing of work. They demonstrated understanding of cubism and its major artists and there was evidence of accurate drawing skills and sophisticated colour studies. This work was supported well by a volunteering project with the Tate Britain, which one half of the group attended. Pupils generally display good attitudes. There is a good relationship between teacher and pupils so that good learning is fostered. Achievement of pupils in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory.

110. Standards of pupils' work in Year 9 are in line with national expectations. They enter the school with a very wide range of abilities and experience and mobility is high. Pupils, therefore, achieve satisfactorily in Years 7 to 9. They respond well to the highly structured teaching and learning and the clear expectations expressed by teachers. Writing frames are also well used to support pupils' literacy skills in critical studies. There is evidence of work based on different cultures being supported well by multicultural designs and artefacts.

111. All art and design teachers are specialists and demonstrate good subject knowledge. Teaching and learning across the school are satisfactory. One Year 8 art and English as an additional language withdrawal group demonstrated teaching that related to pupils' own experiences, thereby motivating them, focusing their learning and achieving confidence in artwork. Links with literacy were achieved in terms of speaking and listening and the use of adjectives and titles to describe their work. There is evidence of good modelling, demonstrations and use of pupils' work, which has a positive impact on learning. A Year 9 popular culture project, based on portraiture and proportions of the face, was supported well by the teacher modelling the process so that pupils

gained in confidence and developed their skills well. There is a consistent, structured approach in lessons providing a focus for pupils' learning and pupils respond well to this approach. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 understand the school grading systems, but are unable to link these to National Curriculum Levels. This means that they do not know what they need to do to make progress. There is a class for GCSE pupils after school to help them to improve standards.

112. Leadership of the department is now good. The newly appointed head of department has ensured that structures are in place to raise standards. However, documentation needs to be updated and the curriculum expanded to include work other than that of two-dimensional drawing and painting. Opportunities for three-dimensional sculpture, ceramics, printing and textiles are under-developed so pupils tend to have too narrow an experience of the art and design curriculum. Statutory requirements for ICT and health and safety are not met. Resources are being improved, particularly in relation to ICT, but at present there is no kiln to support the development of ceramics in the curriculum. Art and design was not inspected at the previous inspection and therefore no judgements can be made on progress since.

## CITIZENSHIP

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

### Strengths

- The introduction of citizenship is well planned and Programmes of Study are in place as an element of PHSE.
- The school council, which is valued by the pupils.

### Areas for improvement

- Not all curriculum areas have identified citizenship in schemes of work.

114. Citizenship is a relatively new feature in the curriculum. During the inspection week, no lessons were observed owing to the timetabling of the subject.
115. The school council plays an important part in school life. Pupils, when interviewed and during conversation spoke of the responsibility the council brings and the involvement in decision making. Pupils feel valued. Within tutor groups the form representatives are respected and they are proud of their position. In a Year 10 form tutor period, the representative led the morning prayer confidently with feeling and spontaneity. In lessons and around school there is mutual respect. The adults lead by example, setting clear standards. Year groups have chosen charities they wish to support. Pupils are enthusiastic about this and are keen to contribute in some way.
116. The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 is well planned with distinct modules for each year group. Suggested resources and activity packages are included in the files, so that all teachers have everything to hand. Topics studied include bullying, the media, racism, codes of behaviour, drugs and violence in society and study options. In Years 10 and 11, some of the same topics are continued to allow for more in-depth study alongside modules such as teenage pregnancy, work experience, court systems, planning for the future, study skills and choice of sixth form. It is planned to use part of the tutor period to extend the subject and to include outside speakers. Visits are planned to play an important part in the subject. Achievement will be reported on certificates. Art and design and music have already included detailed planning for citizenship into schemes of work.

117. The co-ordinator is very enthusiastic and optimistic about the success of citizenship. There has been a whole-school audit to identify needs and to endeavour to make the subject meaningful and fully inclusive. Many high quality and innovative materials are available for lessons to suit the needs of all pupils and to make the subject interesting and purposeful. The intention is to review and assess the success of citizenship regularly, so that all subjects have an input and contribute to its teaching.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

### Strengths

- Teaching in Years 10 and 11 is good.
- Standards of work are beginning to improve.
- The curriculum is enhanced by visits and visitors.

### Areas for improvement

- ICT, in particular computer-aided design, is not used sufficiently.
- Risk assessment is not fully carried out.

119. Standards of attainment are well below the national average at the end of both Years 9 and 11. The 2002 GCSE results for both girls and boys are well below the national average. There are differences in attainment between the subject specialisms. Food technology had the largest number of entries, but pupils performed less well in this area compared with graphic products and resistant materials. Overall, pupils did not perform as well in design and technology as in their other school examinations. In the national assessments at the end of Year 9, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected levels are well below average, with girls attainments higher than those of boys.
120. In work seen during the inspection, attainment at the end of Year 9 is below the national expectation. Across Years 7 to 9 girls and boys achieve satisfactorily over time and in lessons. This is the result of more effective teaching, good schemes of work and clear lesson aims. The majority of pupils have satisfactory making skills. For example, in a Year 8 resistant materials class, pupils used a range of material removal and shaping techniques to manufacture a cassette storage unit. They demonstrated ability to mark out material to within an accuracy of one millimetre, and only a minority required teacher intervention to ensure that it was done correctly. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) make satisfactory progress; the additional support they receive from learning support assistants is helpful to pupils in sustaining motivation and interest. This significantly contributes to their progress. For lower attaining pupils and those with SEN, practical making skills continue to be better developed than other areas of the subject. By Year 9 pupils can write and respond to design briefs and produce specifications for their products.
121. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in Years 10 and 11. This has been supported by the re-organisation that has taken place in the department over the last 18 months, and the introduction of revised schemes of work. In food technology, for example, pupils make pizza with a variety of toppings in preparation for a GCSE coursework project on healthy eating for teenagers. They work with due regard for safety and hygiene. Pupils' portfolios of work in Years 10 and 11 are more fully developed and accurately meet the main examination requirements.
122. Some opportunities to use ICT are given throughout Years 7 to 11. Examples include research analysis presented as a graph and the use of a digital camera to record scale

models made. Pupils acquire a good technical vocabulary. This is aided by the names of tools and processes being translated into other languages, and displayed prominently in the workshop.

123. Across the school pupils' responses are good. All lessons were characterised by good relationships. Pupils are attentive to the teacher during demonstrations and respond well to praise and encouragement. They take an interest in each other's work, and willingly share tools and equipment when required to do so. Improvements to the working environment have had an impact on pupils' attitudes and behaviour in the workshops.
124. Teaching is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. The strengths of lessons observed are good subject knowledge and the way work is planned and targeted to sustain interest and motivation. Teachers group pupils flexibly to provide suitable learning challenges in a series of steps that can be used by pupils as they work at their own pace this also supports the inclusion of pupils with diverse learning needs. Pupils are well managed; where minor misbehaviour occurs it is dealt with effectively, maintaining the continuity of the lesson. Good use is made of enrichment opportunities including a range of educational visits to support teaching and learning. Visits include the Victoria and Albert Museum linked to a body adornment project in Year 9 and furniture making in Years 10 and 11. The department was involved in the 'Designers into schools week' in 2002, which gave pupils the opportunity to work with designers from industry. There is a departmental assessment scheme to record attainment for both key stages. The format allows for feedback from pupils, encouraging them to develop responsibility for their own learning. Displays of a wide range of two/three-dimensional pupils' work are evident and used to encourage a standard for which pupils aim. Teachers contribute to the school literacy policy by encouraging reading and writing to support classwork. All lessons have a list of key words, which are explained in demonstrations to assist pupils' technological understanding.
125. In the last inspection the subject was not specifically reported on so improvement cannot be judged. The facilities are bright, clean and well maintained, benefiting from the support of the department technician. The department does not use CAD/CAM and systems and control opportunities sufficiently. ICT is not employed effectively. There are insufficient risk assessments within the department to ensure compliance with health and safety regulations.

## **HUMANITIES**

126. Geography and history are taught through the humanities department to the requirements of the National Curriculum in Years 7 to 9 and to GCSE level in Years 10 and 11. Currently, however, there is no teaching of geography in Year 11. The department is managed by a dedicated co-ordinator who has a willingness to learn and make progress. Policies and schemes of work are in place and handbooks provide helpful information for the teaching of both subjects. The co-ordinator has a good grasp of the priorities for development in both subjects and what needs to be done to achieve these successfully. Recently appointed to the role, he has had only limited time to develop his management functions. Assessment, although in place, is not used to inform teaching and learning or to set effective targets to raise standards and is not sufficiently linked to the levels of the National Curriculum or GCSE examinations. Monitoring and evaluation of the work of the department through performance management and review are not yet fully in place. The use of ICT does not meet the entitlements of pupils in both subjects, and appropriate methods to cater for the needs

of all pupils taking the subjects are not embedded into the work of the department. Resources in history are unsatisfactory.

## GEOGRAPHY

127. The provision for geography is **satisfactory**.

### Strengths

- The behaviour and attitudes of pupils in lessons are good, contributing significantly to the learning environment of the classroom.
- The planning of lessons is good, with a variety of tasks to interest and motivate pupils.
- Regular marking of pupils' work helps them to know the standards they are achieving.

### Areas for improvement

- Levels of attainment in geography.
- The overall assessment of pupils so that greater use is made of the levels of the National Curriculum and GCSE grades, including providing appropriate tasks and materials to ensure that all pupils are fully included in lessons.
- Monitoring and evaluation of the work of the department and its teacher to raise standards and help plan for the future.
- Schemes of work to link more closely to the National Curriculum, GCSE examinations and to incorporate the wider needs of all pupils.

128. Although attainment in geography is, overall, below expectations, pupils in Year 10 are reaching broadly average standards. There are no pupils currently taking geography in Year 11. In 2002, 31 per cent gained grades A\*-C and 81 per cent grades A\*-G. Although these results are well below national averages the percentage of pupils gaining grades A\* to C is better than that in similar schools. It is also better than in several other subjects taken in the school and represents good achievement during Years 10 and 11 for pupils taking the subject. At the end of Year 9 attainment is also low. Teacher assessments indicate that only 40 per cent of pupils reached Level 5 of the National Curriculum and less than 20 per cent the higher Level 6. This is below expectations.

129. In work seen during the inspection levels of attainment are average overall. For pupils with SEN or whose understanding of English is limited, attainment is often very low. This is because they do not receive sufficient specialist support in lessons and they do not fully understand information or what is required of them. For pupils with higher levels of prior attainment, including some whose first language is not English, levels of attainment are occasionally above average. Year 10 pupils, for example, showed a good understanding of urban geography through detailed work in exercise books, although their overall progress in geography was limited by the time devoted to this one topic. For many, however, attainment is not as good as it could be.

130. Although standards are often low, all pupils make satisfactory progress during Years 7, 8 and 9 from their low levels of prior attainment. For those taking geography in Year 10 attainment is often above average. Pupils' work shows a greater understanding of geographical ideas and concepts as they move through the year groups. They make satisfactory gains in knowledge as shown by a study of shopping habits that included detailed considerations of the conflicts involved in building a big, new shopping centre, illustrated by reference to a large nationally acclaimed project in the local region. Work on levels of development in countries of the world, illustrated by contrasting examples



from India, Brazil and New Zealand, shows good understanding of the principles involved. It also makes an effective contribution to pupils' social and moral education.

131. The progress pupils make is enhanced because they concentrate well and behaviour is good. Relationships are good. Pupils listen well to teachers' expositions, respond intelligently to questions and are challenged through follow-up questioning to explain and reason. This was particularly the case in a Year 7 lesson on congestion in cities, with special reference to London, in which good use was made of homework as a basis for the lesson.
132. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Lessons are well planned, objectives made clear, the pace is often brisk and pupils are kept on task via timed activities. Many have a variety of tasks that aim to involve pupils in the learning experience. Good resources were well used in a simulation exercise on living in cities by pupils in Year 10. Lessons are less successful when the pace is slower, there is little challenge and the geographical content is so limited that no new learning takes place. Work is regularly marked in accordance with the school's marking policy and teachers' comments are increasingly helpful to pupils as they move up the school. Although assisted by the organisation of classes into groups according to ability, the provision of tasks and materials to meet the needs of pupils who have SEN or who are more gifted and talented is rare. Teachers do provide individual support to these pupils, but they often struggle with the work they are expected to do or do not achieve as well as they could because the work is unsuitable.
133. Teachers are mainly non-specialists; they have had little geographical advice and support to help them in the classroom and their lack of detailed knowledge occasionally shows. They work hard to overcome the limitations of teaching the subject in compact classrooms that do not allow space for more practical activities. Much teaching takes place outside the main geography room. Resources are scattered, resulting in too much reliance on photocopied material and worksheets. Schemes of work are insufficiently linked to the requirements of the National Curriculum, GCSE syllabuses, the part geography should play in the wider development of pupils and the special educational needs of all pupils taking the subject. Resources are adequate, but the subject makes too little use of audio-visual material and ICT. Insufficient use is made of the local environment to teach mapwork and the skills that would help pupils to raise attainment. All these factors adversely affect the quality of learning and the standards reached in geography.
134. Teaching has remained satisfactory since the last report. Teachers are willing to learn and find ways to improve the quality of learning they provide. The subject has made satisfactory improvements. Management is beginning to be effective, is aware of the shortcomings in respect of assessment and monitoring, but currently the subject lacks appropriate advisory support to help it to improve.

## HISTORY

135. Overall the provision in history is **satisfactory**

### Strengths

- Teachers provide imaginative and stimulating lessons.
- Teachers have very good knowledge and understanding of the subject.
- Teachers have very good relationships with the pupils.

### Areas for improvement

- Clearer and more effective use of assessment of pupils' progress.
- Schemes of work to link more closely to the National Curriculum.
- Use of ICT and resources.

136. The proportion of pupils attaining grades A\*-C in the GCSE examination in 2002 was 55 per cent, slightly below the national average, but well above the average for all the subjects in the school. The proportion of pupils attaining grades A\*-G was 82 per cent, below both the national and the school average for all the subjects. The majority of the pupils sitting the examination were girls. Standards of work as shown by teacher assessment in 2002 were below the national average at the end of Year 9.
137. Current standards of work in Years 10 and 11 are below the national average. Achievement of most pupils is broadly in line with expectations when related to their achievement at the end of Year 9. In work seen and lessons observed, by the end of Year 11 higher attaining pupils have a sound knowledge of more difficult concepts of history. They recognise different types of propaganda and its effects on recruitment in the First World War. Scrutiny of written work shows that some higher attaining pupils are writing more confidently in essay form. They provide sound examples of fluent, extended answers to comprehension questions and use a good range of appropriate vocabulary; they are able to produce the beginnings of concise and reasoned written work. While lower attaining and EAL pupils make satisfactory progress, they rely on producing narrative events rather than an analysis of them. They work independently, although they are more limited in their use of language and some lack confidence in expressing themselves. Boys are generally more enthusiastic to answer questions and demonstrate their speaking and listening skills. Girls take more time and effort with their written work. Year 11 pupils show their prior knowledge of the effects of the First World War on Britain. Higher attaining pupils analyse evidence from a variety of sources and make judgements. Lower attaining and EAL pupils require more structured support. Some have difficulty with reading key words, such as 'patriotism' and 'diplomacy', although when asked can explain their meaning. They do not volunteer readily and have to be prompted to contribute.
138. Pupils' achievement in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory considering their low standards on entry at Year 7. This is the result of good teaching and pupils' positive attitudes to learning. Higher attaining pupils use extended writing to explain historical concepts. They are beginning to move towards essay form. Lower attaining and EAL pupils find written work more difficult. They write simple sentences with limited vocabulary. In lessons most pupils have a clear understanding of chronology. For example, in Year 9 they make the connection between the use of nuclear weapons on Japan in 1945 and the current international situation. Year 9 pupils brainstorm facts concerning the Second World War and make informed assessments as to whether the atom bomb should have been dropped on Japan or not. They make good use of their literacy skills

in history lessons. Pupils remember the syllable structure of Japanese haiku poetry and are able to use key words from the lesson on Hiroshima to write their own poems.

139. The quality of teaching and learning is good, overall, with some very good features. Teachers have a very good knowledge and understanding of their subject. The pace and organisation in the majority of lessons seen are very good. In one very good lesson the teacher taught with evident passion, enthusing the pupils and stimulating their interest. Teachers explain to pupils what the objectives of the lessons are and ensure that these have been met by relevant questioning at the end. Imaginative use is made of very short video clips at the beginning of a lesson to reinforce the sharp contrast of the dropping of the atom bomb in Japan whilst President Truman attended a baseball game. This immediately engaged the pupils in a dialogue concerning the ethics of the event. Work is organised appropriately for a wide range of abilities. High attaining pupils are encouraged to extend their writing and analyse evidence in depth. In most lessons EAL pupils and those with special educational needs are supported by work at an appropriate level, but pupils who are more gifted and talented are not always provided with sufficiently challenging tasks. Homework is set regularly and used very effectively to reinforce learning; very good examples of follow-up work were observed. Pupils' relationships with teachers are good overall. The majority of pupils are polite, attentive and generally enthusiastic to learn. In a few lessons where there are a majority of lower attaining pupils in overcrowded rooms, teaching and learning suffer because there is inadequate support for both the teacher and pupils. This is also true when teaching and learning has to take place in rooms of other subject areas. Where support assistants are provided for pupils with SEN they are generally used effectively.
140. Many pupils take some responsibility for their own learning by researching information at home from the media and the Internet. However, no use was made of ICT by pupils in the lessons seen. There was no evidence of the use of numeracy. Assessment is not effective and does not support clear target setting. Work is marked following the school's marking and assessment policy, but pupils are not provided with enough consistent information of where they are currently, what their targets for improvement should be and how to reach them. Schemes of work are insufficiently linked to the requirements of the National Curriculum. The range of resources, especially the availability of artefacts, is unsatisfactory, but good use is made of extra-curricular visits to reinforce classroom teaching.
141. Since the previous inspection the department has made good progress overall. Teaching continues to be effective and makes a significant contribution to developing the literacy skills of the pupils.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

142. Overall the provision in ICT is **unsatisfactory**.

### Strengths

- Teachers have good subject knowledge, share learning objectives with pupils and have high expectations.
- Courses in ICT are well managed.
- There are elements of good practice in the use of ICT in mathematics, science, design and technology and business studies.
- The use of white board technology in many of the lessons is developing well.

Areas for improvement

- National Curriculum requirements are not fully met.
- The monitoring of the use of ICT across the curriculum is poor.
- Assessment in Years 7 to 9 is not related to National Curriculum Levels.
- The management of resources in ICT is unsatisfactory.

143. Standards of attainment in ICT in GCSE examinations in 2002 were above the national average. There was no teacher assessment of Year 9 pupils in 2002 and there is no record of pupil attainment against National Curriculum Levels.
144. Attainment in lessons both in Years 7 to 9 and Years 10 and 11 is below the national average. Given well below average standards on entry to the school, pupils' achievement across the school is satisfactory. Pupils understand key concepts and some of the specialist terms. They have a satisfactory level of the basic skills. However, pupils often find difficulty in being critical in their use of ICT and knowing when and when not to use computer-based methods. They also find difficulty in understanding of the context in which ICT problems are set.
145. The quality of teaching in ICT lessons is satisfactory. Teachers have good subject knowledge and understanding and plan their lessons with care. Teachers set clear objectives that are shared with the pupils as a matter of routine. Expectations are high, resources are appropriately used and homework generally reinforces previous learning. In the better lessons, tasks are carefully matched to the individual needs of the pupils. For example, in one Year 7 lesson, a large group of pupils with English as an additional language were well supported in developing their skills in the use of PowerPoint to develop a presentation about themselves. As a result of the class teacher carefully structuring the work using writing frames and modelling the activity for the whole class using the interactive white board.
146. Pupils' learning is satisfactory both in Years 7 to 9 and in Years 10 and 11. They concentrate well and show interest and real intellectual effort in their work. Pupils have no knowledge of the level they have achieved at the end of Year 9 in relation to national norms. However, in Years 10 and 11, pupils are usually aware of their expected future GCSE grade. Although teachers do not often make special provision for pupils with English as an additional language or pupils with SEN in lessons, these groups of pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning. Full use is made of opportunities for celebrating the diverse cultural mix of pupils through the planned work in this subject. For example, in a Year 10 lesson, where pupils were designing a travel agency poster promoting their home country, they were encouraged to take account of the unique aspects of the culture of their country of origin.
147. The quality and range of learning opportunities in ICT is unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9 because not all aspects of the National Curriculum are covered in the scheme of work and there is limited coverage across the curriculum. In Years 10 and 11, while over one half of each year group follows a discrete course in ICT, those not following the course are failing to meet National Curriculum requirements. This is because there is no alternative provision for those not following a GCSE course in ICT, and cross-curricular provision is limited. The use of assessment to inform future learning is unsatisfactory and National Curriculum Levels are not used for assessment purposes in Years 7 to 9.
148. The use of ICT to support learning in other subjects is limited, although there are strengths in the use of ICT in mathematics, science, design and technology and business studies. Interactive white board technology is being used effectively in mathematics, science, design and technology and business studies and their use as a

teaching resource is developing in history and modern foreign languages. Nationally recognised training schemes have had a limited impact on the professional development of teachers. The statutory requirements for using ICT in most of the National Curriculum subjects are not being met.

149. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. While the discrete courses are managed effectively and cross-curricular use of ICT is developing, there is no strategic vision for the teaching of ICT. Management of resources is unsatisfactory; progress in the use of ICT across the curriculum is hampered because of the constraints to accessing the facilities.
150. Improvement since the previous inspection has been limited to the extension of good practice in some areas of the curriculum and is unsatisfactory, overall.

## MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

### Strengths

- Good planning of lessons helps to maintain pupil motivation and build up language skills.
- Classroom management is good.
- The use of the foreign language in lesson delivery.

### Areas for improvement

- Raise standards throughout the school, notably in written work.
- Build rigorous assessment and regular target setting into schemes of work.
- Maximise the use of the foreign language teaching assistants, in lesson planning and lessons.

152. In Year 2002 GCSE examinations in French, the percentage of pupils gaining A\*-C grades was well below the national average, but a considerable increase from the previous year. The girls performed better than in their other subjects and better than the boys. In Spanish, the percentage of A\*-C grades was below national average and lower than 2000, however, 19.5 per cent of pupils gained A\* grade, which was well above national average. Both boys and girls performed better in languages than in other subjects, with the girls outperforming the boys. Factors affecting results are the fact that the whole cohort is entered and there is considerable mobility of pupils entering or leaving the school. A period of unrest in the school has had an impact on performance in the case of the senior pupils. French or Spanish are studied by pupils in Years 7 to 9. By the end of Year 9, in 2002, the proportion of pupils gaining the expected level in French and Spanish was very low compared to the national average. There are no comparisons for previous years.
153. In Years 10 and 11, satisfactory progress is made and standards are currently in line with expectations. Support in lessons is advantageous both to any native speakers who need to be challenged and individual needs. Emphasis is on good pronunciation and fluency and pupils benefit from hearing the spoken language throughout most lessons. This helps with understanding and speaking. Pupils are taught how to pick out relevant details from taped passages. Written work is an area for improvement. Pupils have many opportunities to practise new grammar and answer questions, but skills are limited and extended written work is very much underdeveloped.
154. In Years 7 to 9, satisfactory progress is made and current standards are below expectations. In both French and Spanish, pupils enjoy speaking the languages, but

many have difficulty with writing skills. A survey in Year 7 Spanish classes was popular and pupils behaved well as they moved about class to ask one another about pets. They asked their questions fluently. Findings were then reported using a bar chart. Explicit instructions beforehand enabled pupils to complete the tasks well. In one of these classes several pupils spoke spontaneously to the teacher in Spanish. This is evidence of the positive result where the teacher uses the language throughout, giving the pupils confidence to speak naturally. In a Year 7 French class, pupils were obviously interested in sounds and the spelling of words. Some unusual ideas about how words were spelled ensued. It is obvious that many pupils are really listening to sounds and think about the language. Grammar is taught in context and teachers continuously suggest techniques to help pupils to remember rules and new vocabulary. Listening skills are being developed using tapes and hearing the teachers speak the language. There is the fun element also in lessons. Year 8 enjoyed singing a song and giving directions using the interactive white board. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language cope well in all year groups. There is still more scope in some lessons to provide help for the lower attaining and more challenging work so that the higher attainers can reach their potential.

155. Teaching overall is good. In all year groups all lessons were satisfactory or better with over one half being good. In good lessons, planning enabled lessons to flow with activities linked, so that pupils could build up skills gradually, to consolidate and practise new work. The variety of activity carefully chosen helped with motivation. Lessons were paced to enable work to be completed. Teachers' use of the foreign language acted as a role model. Class management was good. In the satisfactory lessons, although handled well, instances of challenging behaviour slowed down progress. There was insufficient challenge in some lessons, especially for the higher attaining. At times pupils would have benefited from more time to practise new structures via paired work. The two foreign language assistants are beneficial to learning; however, in French there were instances when the assistant was hardly involved in the lesson. Teachers are enthusiastic and give most freely of their time. The language clubs are very popular and are well attended. Teachers have a good relationship with the pupils and know them well. The pupils enjoy language lessons and are generally well behaved. There is an annual day trip to France and one year the gifted and talented pupils were rewarded by a longer period in Paris. Homework is regularly set, although it is not always handed in. Marking showed encouraging comments, but there was no evidence of targets on how to improve. Few pupils knew the level at which they were working. The interactive white board is well used by the teachers.
156. Setting arrangements are not conducive to raising standards, as they are dependent on other subjects. In Year 11 one lower ability class had a lesson at the start of the day and one at the end, which does not encourage learning. Leadership and management are good. The development plan identifies clear priorities for the future. Monitoring of lessons has started. Assessment is irregular. Pupils are not given challenging, but achievable, targets. There are no comparisons to be made from the previous report. However all teaching is satisfactory or better. The majority of pupils are positive about language studies. This is a department that is continually striving to improve, as evidenced by lesson preparation, planning and delivery, resulting in pupil progress.

## MUSIC

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

### Strengths

- Teaching is very good with many strengths.

- The department is well led and has made rapid improvements since September.

#### Areas for improvement

- There is insufficient time to teach music.
- Develop assessment and targets for music linked to the National Curriculum and GCSE that pupils understand.
- Provide room for pupils to practise in small groups during lessons, whilst ensuring that the visiting instrumental staff have appropriate rooms in which to teach.

158. A small group of pupils were entered for GCSE in 2002. No pupils achieved A\* to C grades, but apart from one absentee, all the others were successful in achieving a grade. Standards were well below average. In 2002 the assessments for Year 9 were flawed because of the inexperience of staff at that time in assessing the National Curriculum Levels in music. However, standards were well below what is expected.
159. Very small groups of pupils are studying GCSE music. Current standards are well below average. At the beginning of their Year 11 course, no pupils had started composing. Now, through very good teaching they have put together some simple ideas and have begun to assemble these into basic compositions. Pupils are beginning to use music software to compose up to three layers of sound. Listening and appraising music is difficult for all pupils; they are only just beginning to know how to use appropriate language to describe what they hear. Their knowledge of different styles of music is limited, but they are gradually improving their skills with the use of good questioning and structured teaching in the department. Teaching encourages links between popular music styles and the western traditions. For instance, pupils understand the connection between variation form and a modern 'remix'.
160. Pupils enter the school with very few musical skills and knowledge. By the end of Year 9, pupils' skills in music currently remain well below average, although their achievement over their time in school is satisfactory. In Year 7, pupils are beginning to know and understand the elements of music, although the majority find it difficult to keep the pulse when performing their simple two-bar fragments of melodies or rhythms in small groups. Although they can maintain their own simple parts, only one third of the class play well as an ensemble. Due to of gaps in their learning over the past two years, pupils in Year 9 perform only short melodies or rhythms they have composed. Now, however, most can keep the beat and play successfully as an ensemble - listening to each other carefully and respecting each other's contribution to a rondo piece.
161. There is little support for pupils with SEN or EAL in music classes. In Years 10 and 11 the rationale for putting pupils whose mother tongue is not English into the GCSE course is not clear. No support is available here and, although some appropriate tasks can be given by teachers, it is difficult for these pupils to move forward. The school has identified gifted and talented pupils, but the criteria for these are not clear. In lessons observed, a number of gifted and talented pupils were identified in classes, but they did not show particular talent in music lessons, other than that they may have started instrumental lessons. The achievement of pupils in Years 7 to 9 and in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory and improving. This is due to the very good quality of teaching that is now taking place.
162. Pupils' attitudes to music are improving as they begin to experience stable teaching. Their relationships with each other are generally good as they learn to work together in small groups or as a class. However, there are a small number of pupils who are still struggling to overcome how they used to behave in response to unstable, patchy music

teaching, especially in Years 8 and 9. Teachers use every strategy they can to overcome this barrier to learning. The quality of learning is better in Years 10 and 11 because these are small groups who on the whole have chosen to study music.

163. Teaching is very good and 60 per cent of lessons were very good. There is a great depth of knowledge and understanding here that is enabling the department to move forward rapidly. This has been enhanced by the injection of very good resources. Teachers' detailed planning and its development in response to pupils' abilities is at the core of the progress taking place in lessons. A number of different tasks ensure that all pupils are challenged. Pupils are managed well and the teachers' expertise is used to good effect to show what pupils can achieve as they become more confident in performing to the class. The three-part lesson is used effectively to make sure that pupils understand the objectives of the lesson and whether they have succeeded in attaining them. Verbal assessment during lessons is very good, enabling pupils to know how they are doing at the time. Although written assessments are carried out at the end of units of work and are linked through the school scheme to the National Curriculum, pupils do not yet have sufficient knowledge of their own learning. Homework tasks are given appropriately, but pupils do not write these down in their planners. Although singing is not taking place regularly in class, a good number of boys and girls attend the choir eagerly, and it is hoped this will continue to develop in lessons.
164. Although the curriculum for music is broad and balanced, time for music is low. This makes it difficult to deliver the National Curriculum in the time available. The school provides a wide range of instrumental lessons from visiting teachers. The instrumental lessons seen were effective. Teachers are aware of the abilities of their pupils and are doing all they can to lift their instrumental expertise. Around ten per cent of the pupils have free lessons paid for by the standards fund. This is very good. However, rooms for instrumental staff are limited and cramped and the sound from these encroaches on pupils' learning in music classes. Pupils are encouraged to play their instruments in class when composing and performing. A number of extra-curricular activities take place each day including choir, guitar and keyboard clubs. The choir is taking part in performances with pupils from other schools through the Roundhouse Project and some others are playing or singing in a performance of 'Little Shop of Horrors'.
165. Leadership and management of the subject are good. Schemes of work are being developed that match pupils' abilities. The use of music technology is already under way especially in Years 10 and 11. The use of key words to develop musical language is built into planning and used daily, as is the appropriate use of numeracy. Music policies are being drafted and an appropriate action plan is written. Music is an improving department. The department and the pupils have moved forward significantly since September 2002 when the new head of department was appointed. In addition, the school has injected substantial finance into appointing more instrumental teaching staff and purchasing good quality classroom instruments and technology through the standards fund. All these have made a big difference to pupils' perceptions of music teaching and its value to them.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

### Strengths

- Good teaching that promotes high productivity and pace in lessons.
- The personal development of pupils which is good and leads to high levels of enthusiasm.
- Leadership of the department which gives clear educational direction.
- Commitment of the staff to raising standards.



#### Areas for improvement

- To continue to raise pupils' levels of attainment.
- To develop additional teaching styles to enhance the learning of pupils with low levels of English language acquisition.
- To increase pupils' understanding of National Curriculum Levels and set individual learning goals.
- To complete risk assessment of activity.

167. Examination courses were not a feature of the physical education curriculum until 2001 so no pupils have sat the examination in recent years. Predicted grades for Year 11 pupils following the GCSE course, based on thorough assessment, suggest that three per cent could achieve an A\*-C grade. If achieved this would indicate significant success based on pupils' prior attainment. Teacher assessment of pupils at the end of Year 9 in 2002 indicates that standards in physical education were in line with national expectations. Boys attain slightly higher standards than girls.
168. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are below expectations. GCSE pupils' practical performance far outweighs their theoretical knowledge. This was evident in a practical lesson where all pupils were demonstrating well their skill and understanding of passing the relay baton at speed, whereas in a theory lesson, low attaining pupils lacked knowledge and understanding of physical fitness and physical well-being. The attainment of pupils in Year 10 and 11 core physical education lessons is below national expectations. The majority of pupils perform basic skills well, but few demonstrate control, fluency and tactical awareness. This was highlighted in Years 10 and 11 basketball lessons. Pupil achievement in relation to standards on entry is at present satisfactory.
169. Attainment in Years 7 to 9 is below what is expected. Boys generally reach higher standards than girls. During Years 7 to 9 higher-attaining pupils begin to apply skills accurately with precision and control. This was apparent in a Year 7 rugby lesson where pupils were passing the ball with accuracy whilst understanding and executing the 'run rounder' on a running line. Low-attaining pupils were exploring simple skills. This was evident in Years 8 and 9 gymnastic lessons where pupils were finding ways of achieving flight on and off various apparatus. The majority of pupils are gaining a rudimentary understanding of health-related fitness. The achievement of pupils with SEN is satisfactory. The department is adopting teaching and learning styles appropriate to pupils of different levels of attainment. The achievement of pupils with English as an additional language is also satisfactory. The department has a limited range of strategies for working with pupils who have low levels of English language acquisition. Activities are generally matched to pupils' needs. Higher attaining pupils are stretched by more demanding tasks. This was very evident in a Year 11 fitness lesson, when all pupils extended themselves when performing a fitness circuit.
170. Pupils are encouraged to learn by the good teaching they receive. In a high proportion of lessons seen teaching was good or better. The high quality of teaching has a good impact on the pace and productivity in lessons. It enhances the learning environment and promotes pupil success. All teachers are secure in their knowledge of their subject. Teachers produce enjoyable lessons that promote high levels of interest and enthusiasm. Teachers plan lessons well. Learning objectives are shared with pupils. The majority of pupils have good attitudes to learning. Pupils' personal development is good and the majority respond well with high levels of commitment. Occasionally, when class management is less than good, immature behaviour amongst lower-attaining pupils inhibits learning. Most pupils, particularly those in Years 7 and 9 are hard

working, enthusiastic and well motivated. Levels of participation in lessons are generally high, although on a few occasions attendance at lessons was below national averages.

171. The curriculum meets statutory requirements. Below average standards of literacy and numeracy have less of a negative impact on pupil performance in physical education. Nevertheless, the department puts importance on developing pupils' literacy skills. Staff emphasise key words. The promotion of numeracy is less well developed. However poor accommodation limits the range of learning opportunities. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is not yet offering a range of accredited courses appropriate to pupils' levels of attainment. Extra-curricular provision is good and developing. Pupils have opportunities to participate in clubs, inter-form competitions and team games. Assessment procedures are at an embryonic stage, but do show how pupils are progressing. The department is not yet fully analysing the attainment of pupils of different ethnic groups.
172. Management is satisfactory. The newly appointed head of department ensures clear educational direction. The staff form a strong team and share a commitment to succeed. They are good role models to the pupils. The department is beginning to contribute significantly to the ethos of the school. Departmental documentation is sound. The monitoring of teaching is not yet a feature of the department's work. Risk assessment of activities has not been completed. Accommodation is poor and restricts the time allocated to physical activity. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.