

INSPECTION REPORT

BENTLEY WOOD HIGH SCHOOL

Stanmore, Middlesex

LEA area: HARROW

Unique reference number: 102241

Headteacher: ANNETTE FORD

Reporting inspector: Barbara Hilton
3228

Dates of inspection: 7 - 11 October 2002

Inspection number: 249094

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	12-16
Gender of pupils:	Female
School address:	Bridges Road STANMORE Middlesex
Postcode:	HA7 3NA
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Gwen Day
Date of previous inspection:	7-11 October 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
3228	Barbara Hilton	Registered inspector		<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>How high are standards?</p> <p>a) The school's results and achievements</p> <p>How well are pupils taught?</p> <p>How good are the curricular and other opportunities?</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p>
9561	Husain Akhtar	Lay inspector		<p>How high are standards?</p> <p>b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development</p> <p>How well does the school care for its pupils?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p> <p>Inclusion</p>
8076	Terence Bendall	Team inspector	<p>Design and technology</p> <p>Information and communication technology (including business studies)</p>	
10448	Michael Elson	Team inspector	Religious education	How good are curricular (spiritual, moral, social and cultural) opportunities?

10029	Hazel Haynes	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages (French, German and Spanish)	
1779	David Leonard	Team inspector	Science	
30281	Dorcas O'Dell	Team inspector	Art Special educational needs	
19925	Margaret Price	Team inspector	Mathematics	
1795	Joyce Sanderson	Team inspector	History English as an additional language	
14446	Barry Simmons	Team inspector	Physical education Citizenship	
1130	Barry Smith	Team inspector	Geography	
11720	Philip Winch	Team inspector	English	
31660	Marianne Young	Team inspector	Drama Music	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Bentley Wood High School is a Year 8-11 comprehensive community school for girls, in the London Borough of Harrow. Situated on the edge of parkland in Stanmore, the school is smaller than most, with a total of 712 pupils, most of whom (90%) continue their education on leaving the school.

The school is popular and oversubscribed. Pupils enter from about 50 schools, in and beyond Harrow, and come from a wide variety of backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, at 27%, is above the national average. Attainment on entry is below average in most years; 20% pupils have special educational needs but only 1.2% have statements. About half of the pupils with special educational needs have emotional and behavioural needs; most of the rest have moderate learning difficulties and small numbers have a variety of other needs, including visual impairment.

The school has a richness of faiths, languages and cultures with white British and Asian British-Indian pupils (each about 20%), Black Caribbean and Black African pupils who total about 15%, Pakistani pupils about 9% and the rest come from other Asian and mixed backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language, 60%, is very high; the main home languages are Gujarati, Arabic, Urdu and Somali. While most speak English fluently, almost 10%, including some refugees and recent arrivals, are at an early stage of learning English and receive support. Mobility has been a feature of some years. The school includes a high proportion of refugees (25% - mostly from Somalia) but few are recent arrivals; a few are travellers. The turnover of pupils in Year 11 in July 2002 had been 50% since Year 8, but mobility for the whole school in 2001-02 was only about 4%.

The school has maintained its size and popularity since the last inspection but is much more diverse now, partly due to demographic changes in Harrow and also because some parents prefer the environment of a girls' school for their daughters. The proportions of refugees and of pupils eligible for free school meals have increased markedly. Attainment on entry has dipped: more pupils have special educational needs than in 1996. The school participates in a variety of initiatives to raise achievement (for example, Young Enterprise, the Windsor fellowship programme, Trans Age project) and has received the School Achievement Award for Excellence in the last two years.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Bentley Wood High School is a good school, and improving. Standards are good; pupils achieve well at GCSE. Teaching is good, with strengths in English, geography and history and in some aspects of mathematics and modern foreign languages. Very effective leadership and teamwork enable the school to use its time and talents well; it provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils' achievements and results, especially in English, geography, history and modern foreign languages.
- Expectations which are high: teachers use their knowledge and skills very effectively, enabling pupils to learn well.
- Pupils develop mature attitudes. They contribute well in lessons and enthusiastically to the life of the school.
- Pupils are valued: the school has adapted to their changing needs through providing very effective support and building on their strengths.
- Strong leadership and teamwork have established a very positive ethos in which pupils enjoy learning and the contributions of all are valued and respected.

What could be improved

- The achievement of pupils in information and communication technology.
- Provision of religious education for all pupils in Years 10 and 11.
- The progress the school makes towards implementing the requirement for collective worship.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has effectively maintained good standards since the last inspection with increased diversity of pupils. Teaching is substantially improved and pupils make better progress up to the end of Year 9. More effective use is made of assessment. Some improvements have been made in arrangements for information and communication technology but pupils still do not receive their full curricular entitlement, nor do they in religious education in Years 10 and 11. Bearing in mind the very good leadership and teamwork in the school, its capacity for further improvement is good.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
GCSE examinations	B	B	B	A	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E

GCSE results are good: they have been above the national average in recent years up to 2001 and results for five subjects at the higher grades (A*-C) have been well above average. The results reflect good achievement from the standards of pupils on entry in Year 8, which are below average overall. Results are well above average, when compared with other schools with similar proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals, who do well at Bentley Wood. GCSE results in each of the core subjects (English, mathematics and science) were above average in 2001 and broadly similar in 2002 (except in science, where results dipped). These results reflect very good progress from the end of Year 9 in English and mathematics, and good progress in science. More able pupils achieve particularly well in mathematics. In recent years overall standards in National Curriculum tests in the core subjects have generally been above the national average, with English results being better than those in mathematics and science.

Results in 2002, both at GCSE and at the end of Year 9, were in line with the national averages (for 2001); targets were exceeded by GCSE results overall and met by Year 9 results. The rate of improvement in GCSE results is below that nationally but Year 9 results are improving in line with national trends. The dip in results in 2002 reflects lower attainment levels of those pupils on entry to the school. Predictions, based on national tests and school assessments, indicate pupils are in line to achieve above average results in 2003, particularly at GCSE.

Standards in lessons observed were broadly in line with national expectations at the end of Year 9 and above average in Year 11. Pupils are making good progress, particularly those with special educational needs and those at an early stage of learning English. Pupils' good literacy skills and competence in numeracy help them progress in all their subjects. Pupils achieve very good GCSE results in English language, English literature, geography, business studies and modern foreign languages and, in most years, in history. Staffing changes have affected results in science, music, physical education and drama (2001) but standards are improving with staff stability. Pupils' achievements in information and communication technology and in religious education (in Years 10 and 11, for those not taking GCSE) are below national expectations because pupils do not receive their full entitlement to the National Curriculum in these subjects.

Pupils from most ethnic minority backgrounds achieve in line with the overall results for the school, with Asian British-Indian pupils doing a little better than average and some white pupils underachieving because they are too frequently absent. A good proportion of pupils – about 90 per cent – continue their education on leaving the school; they are well supported by their parents. The school analyses results

and makes effective use of targets to raise achievement. In recent years suitably challenging targets have been exceeded.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils enjoy school and value what the school provides: their attitudes are very good.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils are friendly, respectful and courteous. Their very good behaviour helps teachers to provide lessons of quality and value.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils develop mature attitudes and respect for others. All groups enjoy working and learning together: relationships are very good.
Attendance	Good: attendance is above average.

Pupils' positive attitudes lead to academic and personal success. Pupils with special educational needs and those at an early stage of learning English are supported very well by the school's arrangements and the friendship of others.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 8 – 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 and learning are good and substantially better than at the last inspection. Teaching in several subjects is very good, namely English, geography and history. In most other subjects, including mathematics and modern foreign languages, teaching is good and it is satisfactory in science, religious education and information and communication technology. Teachers use their subject knowledge and understanding very effectively to help pupils understand. They manage pupils very well so pupils contribute effectively to their own learning. Planning is good; lessons include a varied range of activities. Literacy is very well planned and helps pupils to communicate effectively and learn in all subjects. Numeracy is well taught in mathematics and plans are in hand for a systematic approach across the curriculum. Assessment is well used to challenge and raise attainment in most subjects but practice is inconsistent in some, affecting pupils' progress in some lessons in science and in information and communication technology, particularly.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good provision overall. Pupils are helped to do well in most subjects, but underachieve in information and communication technology and religious education (Years 10 and 11), for those not taking GCSE because the requirements of the National Curriculum are not met.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Pupils are well supported. Provision is appropriate for the needs of individuals and they progress well.

Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Pupils just beginning to learn English and those not fully fluent are effectively supported through a systematic approach.
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Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Support for pupils' personal development is well planned and central to the ethos of the school, cultivating a climate in which all individuals are valued and respected as equal partners.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pastoral care is very well organised. Good guidance is provided on pupils' welfare, performance and their futures.

Provision for pupils' personal development has improved since the last inspection, their spiritual development, especially. Staff are good role models. The school is implementing the citizenship curriculum, building on the very good foundation developed in personal, social and health education. Regular assemblies are held but the school has not moved towards greater compliance with the requirement for worship. The school works in effective partnership with parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher and senior team lead by example and good teamwork, effectively promoting academic achievement and pupils' personal development. The management in English, mathematics, geography, history, modern foreign languages, physical education and learning development is very capable.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory overall. Governors are supportive and well informed about the school. Statutory requirements are not met in the provision of information and communication technology, religious education (Years 10 and 11) and with regard to collective worship.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school evaluates its overall performance systematically and well. More use could be made of assessment information in some departments to adapt the curriculum and raise achievement.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are used effectively. Investment in learning development helps pupils with special educational needs and those learning to speak English to keep up in their classes. The school has a good sense of best value.

The school is well staffed and resourced. Recent investment has improved computer facilities, but further improvement is needed. Support staff, including the librarian, network manager and administrative staff, contribute well to the life of the school. Accommodation is adequate and refurbished areas provide a business-like working environment, but more space is needed for several subjects. The site is spacious and very pleasant.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standards achieved in most subjects. Teachers are very willing to help their daughters learn. Pupils support each other and express themselves well. Homework is generally used effectively. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standards in science and the use of computers could be better.

Only a small number of parents (14) attended their meeting with the registered inspector. Comments at that meeting and in response to the questionnaire were almost wholly favourable and confirmed by inspection findings in this good school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. GCSE results are good: they have been above the national average in recent years up to 2001 and results for five subjects at the highest grades (A*-C) have been well above average. In most years the school's results have been better than the average for girls' schools nationally. The results reflect good achievement from the standards of pupils on entry in Year 8, which are below average overall. Results are well above average when compared with other schools with similar proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals, who tend to do well at Bentley Wood.
2. Overall GCSE results in 2002 were in line with the national average for 2001; targets were exceeded for results at the higher grades. The dip in results in 2002 reflects lower attainment levels of that year group on entry to the school. Predictions, based on national tests and school assessments, indicate pupils are in line to achieve above average results in 2003. Results are broadly similar to at the time of the last inspection. The rate of improvement in GCSE results is below that nationally for the last few years but over that time the pupils at Bentley Wood have increased in diversity and need, with more pupils who have special educational needs or are at an early stage of learning English or have refugee status. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals has also increased.
3. Pupils achieve well up to the end of Year 9: this is a marked improvement since the last inspection. Results of core subjects overall (English, mathematics and science) are above the national average in most years and better than the average for girls, with English results being better than mathematics and science results being broadly average. Results at this stage are very high relative to similar schools. Year 9 results are improving in line with the national trend although in 2002 results dropped a little, reflecting lower attainment levels of that year group on entry in Year 8. Teacher assessments in other subjects are in line with the national averages. Pupils achieve very good GCSE results in English language, English literature, geography, business studies, modern foreign languages and, in most years, in history. Results in these subjects exceed both the overall national averages and the average for girls' schools by a substantial margin. Results in mathematics, in which more able pupils do particularly well, are also good. Pupils do not do quite as well in science at GCSE as in their other subjects but their results in 2001 were above average and, while they dipped in 2002, are likely still to be a little above average. GCSE results reflect very good progress from the end of Year 9 in English and mathematics, and good progress in science. GCSE results in religious studies and in art were above the national averages in 2001 and while not quite as good in 2002 are likely to be a little above average in religious studies and only a little below average in art. Staffing changes have affected results in music, drama, physical education and, to some extent, in science. While 2002 results are likely to be below average in music and well below average in physical education, the overall trend is of improvement, as evident in the drama results achieved which were similar to the average nationally (for recent years). Results in design and technology subjects (food and textiles) match the national average, and are a little below average for girls.
4. Standards in lessons observed were broadly in line with national expectations at the end of Year 9 and above average in Year 11. Inspection evidence is that pupils are making good progress, particularly those with special educational needs and those at an early stage of learning English. They make good gains in knowledge and understanding up to the end of Year 9 and many learn to handle information well and evaluate as they progress through Years 10 and 11. In English, for example, older pupils formulate opinions, build on the ideas of others and ask telling questions. Their capacity to gather data, analyse it and draw conclusions enables them to reach high standards in geography coursework and develop a reasoned argument in history. Pupils make

good gains in Years 8 and 9 in modern foreign languages - many start Spanish or German for the first time in Year 8. They maintain good progress through Years 10 and 11 by which time standards are above average in French, German and Spanish lessons. In contrast, progress in science tails off in Year 9 (after a good start in Year 8) and again in Year 11 (after good achievement in Year 10). These differences are linked to inconsistencies in teaching and the strengthening of the scheme of work for Year 8. Standards and progress vary across subjects in design and technology, being stronger in food technology and textiles than in resistant materials. Pupils' experience with a range of resistant materials is too limited, and they do not apply principles of design with enough rigour. Pupils' achievements in information and communication technology and in religious education (in Years 10 and 11, for those not taking GCSE) are below national expectations because pupils do not receive their full entitlement to the curriculum, and this limits their progress.

5. Standards of literacy are above average. The development of literacy has been well co-ordinated and links with learning support, both for pupils with special educational needs and those at an early stage of learning English, strengthen their progress. Very well planned opportunities in English for pupils to improve their reading, writing, speaking and listening help them both to do well in English and also to learn their other subjects. Key words are displayed in many classrooms and technical language is generally well used. In most lessons pupils practise reading and writing. Pupils regularly prepare written evaluations of their work in food technology, textiles and drama. They present written accounts and analysis of circumstances and events in geography and history. In a few instances inconsistencies detract from the overall good picture. Pupils have few opportunities to write creatively in art. In science, key words are not consistently well used. In modern foreign languages, opportunities for extended writing and spontaneous conversation are limited.
6. Numeracy standards are good, overall. Pupils are helped to develop their skills through many opportunities provided in mathematics. No whole school strategy is in place to improve pupils' number skills across the curriculum. Nevertheless, numeracy is effectively used in subjects including history, geography, science and design and technology. Mathematics teachers have already undertaken training in numeracy and plans are in hand to extend this throughout the school, to strengthen pupils' skills through work in all subjects.
7. A good proportion of pupils - about 90 per cent - continue their education on leaving the school. The school analyses its results and compares them with results nationally and for Harrow. Effective use is made of targets to raise results and in recent years suitably challenging targets have been exceeded. School results are evaluated relative to pupils' earlier attainment and their background. Pupils from most ethnic minority backgrounds achieve in line with the overall results for the school, with Asian British-Indian pupils doing a little better than average and some white pupils underachieving because they are too frequently absent. In subjects targets are set for GCSE results and for individual pupils relative to earlier school assessments. In 2002, a good proportion of the pupils with special educational needs exceeded their target grades in English, for example. Overall the availability of assessment information, its analysis and use are good - and much improved since the last inspection. However, little evaluation of progress is made in subjects relative to pupils' background and this is an area for development.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good, as at the time of the last inspection. Pupils, including those who have additional educational needs, or who are coping with unfavourable circumstances, also show high levels of motivation and independence. Pupils arrive in good spirits in the mornings, some well before the start of the school day. Their interest in the school remains high even after the end of the day and many relish the good range of additional activities available to them. In their responses to the inspection questionnaire, a large proportion of parents said that their children like the school; pupils interviewed confirmed that this is the case. In lessons, pupils, even those who are younger, are well motivated. They work hard and purposefully and learn well, as observed in a Year 8 mathematics lesson where pupils were doing multiplication and

subtraction. In a Year 11 geography lesson pupils took exceptional interest in the activity and made very good progress in learning about rivers.

9. Pupils with special educational or language needs are well integrated in classes and respond very well to the support that they receive. Pupils help each other and the majority of pupils with special educational needs and those at an early stage of learning English engage in lessons enthusiastically. Although at least half of the special educational needs which are listed on the register concern emotional and behavioural difficulties, there is very little disruptive or challenging behaviour in lessons or about the school. The ethos of learning support is positive and pupils take pleasure in learning. In Year 10, a blind pupil enjoys school life, especially science, history and food technology. She is very proud of being in the top set for mathematics. For other pupils, who find learning more difficult, careful lesson planning and firm management of behaviour support them in developing confidence. Pupils state clearly that they like extra help and are well motivated when taught in classes or in smaller groups.
10. The school focuses very well on the development of individuals. Pupils' personal development is very good: they take initiative, work independently and choose their activities. For example, Year 11 pupils devised and performed an impressive short play on the theme of Black History Month in their assembly during the inspection week. Pupils are assertive and do not shy away from speaking out. In a Year 9 personal, social citizenship and health education lesson on 'law', pupils asked many searching questions of the visiting police officer. They understand the importance of hard work and take responsibility for their own achievements. Pupils are well organised and act like responsible adults. They use their link books well and are careful about their lockers. Pupils, including those who have additional educational needs or who are coping with unusual circumstances, show good commitment and enjoy participating in activities such as the school council, Harrow Youth Forum, Young Enterprise and working as a school receptionist or in the library.
11. Pupils behave very well in most lessons where they are almost always attentive, calm and prepared to live up to the expectations of the teacher. They contribute substantially to the progress they make in their learning. They behave equally well outside of lessons. The school is calm and movement is orderly despite narrow circulation areas. Inspectors saw no incidents of any oppressive behaviour. Bullying is not an issue in the school. Pupils treat school property, including displays, with care. The number of exclusions is average. They are for a short period and purposefully used. The black pupils are slightly over-represented in these exclusions but not because that they have been treated differently. Correct procedures for exclusion are followed.
12. The school has been very successful in shaping pupils' personalities, through their social and cultural development. Pupils form very constructive relationships with adults and other pupils. They function amicably in the diverse and rich school community and are well used to respecting the views and feelings of others. They listen courteously to others in assemblies and religious education lessons where different beliefs and traditions are considered. Pupils value each other's performances in drama. All groups of pupils mix and work together very well. This was evident in lessons and during breaks when pupils socialise. Many examples of co-operation and practical help were seen. In a Year 9 science lesson, pupils co-operated very well and helped each other to progress in investigating the reaction of metal with acids. Similarly, in a Year 11 art lesson pupils worked together productively to develop Islamic and African patterns. Pupils show good care and concern for others, for example, by following safety instructions in practical activities.
13. Attendance is good, being above the national average. Whilst most pupils attend the school regularly and promptly, a small number of white pupils are too frequently absent or late because of their lack of interest in school. Other pupils are sometimes late, for reasons of transport problems or distance involved. The little unauthorised absence recorded is mainly because parents have not supplied a reason for absence.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14. Teaching and learning are good. In almost three-quarters of lessons teaching is good or better and in almost a third it is good, occasionally excellent. Teaching is satisfactory (virtually never unsatisfactory) in the rest. Learning follows a similar pattern. Teaching is better than at the last inspection. No longer is unsatisfactory teaching a feature of Year 9 lessons and there is more good and very good teaching. At the last inspection, pupils were sometimes passive. Now they contribute well to their learning. They are very well behaved, enabling teachers to involve them in an interesting range of activities. They develop good learning skills, enquire and state their views openly, so that teachers can gauge and further their understanding. Overall, good management and well planned, challenging activities enable them to learn well. Teaching and learning are strengths in several subjects, notably in English, geography and history. In most other subjects they are good, including mathematics and modern foreign languages, and they are satisfactory in science, religious education and information and communication technology.
15. Strengths of teaching are teachers' high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour so pupils develop high expectations of themselves. Teachers plan a good range of lesson activities enabling, in both English and history, for example, pupils to develop good critical skills and to take the initiative. In English, inspectors observed teachers explaining to Year 8 pupils the roots of words (stemming from the Greek, Latin, Anglo-Saxon and French languages); Year 9 pupils were required to make presentations on books they had read; inspirational and challenging teaching of *The Merchant of Venice* with Year 11 pupils helped them understand characterisation and opposing viewpoints. In Year 8 history, pupils were challenged through discussion and group work to consider why people wanted to make changes in the Church in the Middle Ages; Year 10 pupils identified the achievement of the provisional government during the Russian revolution; and Year 11 pupils prepared reasoned essays on why the USA gave strong support to southern Korea in 1950. In mathematics, challenge is especially high for more able pupils. In a Year 11 lesson, for example, they responded and learned well when required to solve simultaneous equations, with one being a quadratic. However, work is not challenging enough in information and communication technology (especially in Year 8), in occasional lessons in science and in resistant materials. In lessons in these subjects pupils sometimes coast, rather than extending their learning.
16. An overall strength is teachers' class management. Very good relationships help pupils to contribute and become independent learners - as observed, for example, in a religious education lesson with Year 11 pupils who were studying a topic on Christianity concerning animals and the environment. The use of circle time in personal, social, citizenship and health education engenders trust and openness. Its effective use helped pupils in Year 8 to understand more about their responsibilities and pupils in Year 10 to appreciate issues concerning human rights. Teachers know pupils well and are considerate of their needs, as observed in food technology and textiles, for example. Pupils readily ask questions and they and their parents say teachers are very willing to help, both in lessons and after school. Homework is well used throughout and teachers report on this regularly to parents.
17. Teachers make effective use of their subject knowledge. In mathematics, for example, teachers give very clear explanations. Spanish teachers have excellent accents, which pupils mimic. In many subjects teachers draw very effectively on their subject knowledge to ask questions which emphasise important points and help to assess pupils' understanding. Assessment is notably well used in modern foreign languages, where pupils understand what is required and how to improve. For example, in a Year 9 Spanish lesson pupils understood they needed to make agreements between nouns and adjectives; in French, Year 9 pupils appreciated the importance of giving opinions and adding detail in writing; and Year 11 pupils in German learned the significance of future and conditional tenses. Little use is made of assessment in information and communication technology and practice is inconsistent in science. Evaluation is effectively used to help pupils to improve, as in physical education, where Year 10 pupils were observed improving their balance in gymnastics and their skills in basketball. In art, pupils make effective use of their sketchbooks to develop their ideas and improve their work. Similarly, pupils in drama activities improved their skills in dialogue (Year 8), understanding dramatic status (Year 9) and of performance (Year 10) through evaluation of their own and others' work. Evaluation is starting to

be used effectively in music, as observed when Year 8 pupils improved their work on draft scores and when Year 10 pupils developed a short motif into an 8-bar melodic line.

18. Basic literacy skills are very well taught in English, with library lessons for younger pupils which help them to develop good reading habits. Pupils are also helped to gain good listening and speaking skills, as observed in English when Year 10 pupils discussed the play *An Inspector Calls* which they used effectively to develop understanding of characterisation. Key words are displayed in many subject rooms, as in art and drama. Pupils have a very good grasp of technical vocabulary in geography and make effective use of glossaries in history. While number and mathematical ideas are frequently used in several subjects (as in the use of graphs by Year 9 pupils in science and the proportions of faces in drawing portraits by Year 8 pupils in art) no systematic approach to developing numeracy skills across the curriculum has been established.
19. Books and equipment are generally very well used. In several subjects computers are used to very good effect - as in English, history and modern foreign languages. However, relatively little use is made of computers in art or in design and technology. No systematic approach is used in teaching and assessing information and communication technology skills across the curriculum and this is a significant weakness.
20. Lesson time is generally well used. In several subjects lessons follow a well-established pattern, often with good use of questions at the start to remind pupils of previous work, class discussion and then other activities for pupils, with a plenary at the end during which learning is summarised. A pattern such as this is used in drama, with a good range of practical activities included, and also in geography, where regular use is made of well-designed worksheets. Mathematics lessons frequently begin with starter activities which help to reinforce basic understanding, for example, of multiplication (in Year 8) and Pythagoras' rule (Year 9). Role play is effectively used in English, history and geography. Pupils respond well to the vocational context of topics covered in business studies.
21. Planning for pupils with special educational needs is good, reinforced by the very good awareness of teachers in all subjects about developing literacy skills. Teachers have received appropriate training and take good account of the needs of individuals. They are careful to include more vulnerable pupils in all activities. Pupils stay in their classes for the majority of lessons and keep up in their learning. Well-focused and planned support strengthens teaching. Generally, liaison between support assistants and subject teachers is good. In an English lesson observed, a pupil chose to partner her support assistant and join in a role-play, enjoying the good-humoured support of her class. Pupils establish good rapport with learning support assistants and appreciate the help they receive. Teachers have high expectations of pupils with special educational needs. Support assistants usually encourage pupils to become independent learning in lessons. Occasionally, however, too much emphasis is placed on finishing work, rather than understanding the main point of a lesson, and this holds back learning. Overall, pupils with special educational needs learn well and make good progress, especially in English, mathematics, science, art and physical education.
22. Provision for pupils who are learning to speak English is reported on separately, at the end of Part B of this report. They are supported by the learning development department, which also supports pupils with special educational needs. In lessons, pupils learning English receive help from teachers and from learning support assistants. Overall, support is good and pupils learn well.

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

The curriculum

23. The curriculum is effectively organised to help pupils to make good progress up to GCSE. The range of subjects is broad and balanced and opportunities in modern foreign languages are good

(three are offered: French, German and Spanish). All pupils study two foreign languages up to the end of Year 9, although relatively few take two at GCSE. Curricular planning in several subjects is very thorough, providing stimulus and challenge to enable pupils of all abilities to achieve very well, as in English, geography, history and modern foreign languages. Teachers have the pressure of only two years in which to prepare pupils for Year 9 tests and assessments. The school is planning improvements across all subjects, in response to the Government's Key Stage 3 strategy. Planning is particularly good in English. In mathematics, the more able pupils are well challenged and they successfully achieve high standards in Year 9 and at GCSE. In science, however, pupils do not do as well as in English and mathematics. Recent improvement in the scheme of work for Year 8 is strengthening pupils' progress but generally in science planning for the wide range of pupils' abilities and needs is not careful enough to maximise their progress.

24. In two subjects, substantial weaknesses occur because the full statutory curriculum is not provided. Only a small minority of pupils continue to study religious education in satisfactory breadth in Years 10 and 11 (because they have chosen to take the subject at GCSE). The rest cover topics in their personal, social, citizenship and health education lessons but not extensively enough to meet the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus. Only about half the pupils in Years 10 and 11 continue with a systematic approach to learning information and communication technology (those taking business studies) but the rest do not, because the school is not providing the statutory curriculum. Weaknesses also occur in provision in Years 8 and 9. While several subjects make good use of computers in lessons (for example, history and modern foreign languages) the aspects of the information technology curriculum which pupils learn and their progress are not planned and assessed with enough rigour. This was a key issue of the last inspection and work still remains to be done. Several aspects of the National Curriculum in design and technology are also not covered to the required depth.
25. Strengths of the curriculum include planning for the improvement of pupils' literacy skills, in English and across all subjects. Numeracy is well planned in mathematics but not yet across the curriculum. Links between literacy, provision for pupils with special educational needs and those learning to speak English are very effective. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils receive help in their subject lessons and some have individual or small group lessons. The school meets the statutory requirements outlined in pupils' statements of special educational needs. Individual Education Plans are well written; targets are practical, realistic and measurable. Teachers' planning ensures relevant support is in place, for example, when Braille materials are required. Extra literacy groups are provided in Years 9 and 11. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 can take an accredited course which enables them to improve their literacy, numeracy and personal skills through practical projects. Pupils have support for their coursework in GCSE subjects and individual arrangements are made to help pupils continue their learning in purposeful ways. One pupil, for example, spends part of the week at a local special school and also attends a college of further education. Curriculum provision for pupils at an early stage of learning English is good (see the separate section, at the end of Part B of this report).
26. Extra-curricular opportunities are good. The range of activities at lunchtime and after school is reasonably broad with a good number of physical education or sports activities and clubs in most subjects. Study support and homework clubs provide opportunities to catch up on work and annually teachers provide very effective revision classes for examination groups. The programme of educational visits is good - for modern foreign languages, especially, and also for geography field work. More general visits at the end of the summer term are very varied, to foster learning and enjoyment (for example, to Whipsnade Zoo). Opportunities for performance enhance standards in drama and music, as well as pupils' self-confidence and stage management skills (for example, in a recent production of *The Crucible* and music evenings). Pupils who speak community languages at home are encouraged to attend lessons outside of school and take appropriate GCSEs - and they generally do very well, as in Arabic, Urdu and Gujarati, for example.
27. The school has initiated citizenship provision and is well placed to develop this strongly within personal, social, citizenship and health education, which is very well planned and effectively

taught. The range of activities in the citizenship programme is broad with many visits, visitors and practical activities which capture the interest of pupils. They learn new skills and appreciate the situations of others - for example, how to manage a wheelchair and the feelings of the disabled. Requirements are met for sex and health education and drugs awareness as well as for careers education and guidance. All pupils participate in planned work experience and have independent careers advice .

28. Senior staff do their best to maintain pastoral links with feeder middle schools but in most years pupils enter from many schools - about 35, drawn from a pool of about 50 in Harrow and nearby authorities. Little joint curricular planning has been established with feeder schools, except in science, where it has been helpfully co-ordinated by the science adviser for Harrow, with middle schools in the authority. Post-16, a high proportion (90 per cent) of pupils transfer to colleges and school sixth forms across a wide area. They participate in a programme of visits and talks and benefit from specialist advice on planning their futures. Links with local Harrow high schools are being invested in a collaborative plan to seek specialist school status which, for Bentley Wood High School, would be for mathematics and information and communication technology.
29. While aspects of the curriculum have improved since the last inspection - especially the account taken of the National Curriculum in planning schemes of work - not enough progress has been made in relation to meeting National Curriculum requirements in information and communication technology and religious education (Years 10 and 11). Both remain unsatisfactory, as at the last inspection.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural opportunities

30. The school provides very well for pupils' personal development. At the time of the last inspection provision for pupils' spiritual development was a weakness but now it is satisfactory. The school held an audit of the curriculum that has raised teachers' awareness and led to changes in schemes of work. Reflection on human experience and discussion of beliefs and values feature in many lessons. Form tutors have been trained in the use of circle time and pupils value the availability of peer listeners, trained by a national counselling organisation. The school has created a culture of emotional support and respect for other people's feelings. Assemblies are valuable occasions but pupils are not given the opportunity to experience collective worship and the school has no immediate plan to introduce it. In Years 8 and 9, pupils are taught about the great religions of the world but in Years 10 and 11 the school has, since the last inspection, continued to withhold from pupils their statutory entitlement to religious education. The commitment in the school improvement plan to its introduction as a short course GCSE is a step towards the introduction of more rounded provision for pupils' spiritual development.
31. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. The school has a well-understood code of behaviour. Assemblies are often presented entirely by pupils working together and include moral elements such as race relations or problems associated with body image and eating disorders. The rights and wrongs of life feature in many lessons and help pupils to a mature sense of morality. Moral issues arise and are discussed in different subjects. The programme of personal, social, citizenship and health education is a carefully planned and structured sequence of topics that develops moral sensitivity. These lessons emphasise skills and process and have been strengthened by the addition of citizenship. Rights and responsibilities is a theme that recurs in the programme and becomes very practical when a police officer explains the rights of a young person suspected of a crime. The low provision of religious education for all in Years 10 and 11 (a module in personal, social, citizenship and health education) restricts pupils' opportunities to consider moral issues from an informed religious point of view.
32. Provision for pupils' social development is excellent. Pupils in Year 8 say that the best aspect of the school is that it enables them to develop personal initiative and social responsibility. The school has created a culture in which social development is prized and rewarded. Because of this encouragement pupils voluntarily prepare assemblies on topics of concern to them and develop the skills of public presentation and speaking. The school challenges racist myths, such as those about asylum seekers, as can be seen from displays in the corridors. Opportunities occur across the whole curriculum for pupils to develop collaborative skills by working in pairs or

groups. In Year 11, as part of the programme of personal, social, citizenship and health education, pupils experience the sense of dependence and interdependence that life in a wheelchair brings. The school council is well established and a practical expression of the school's involvement in promoting the skills of citizenship. The introduction of citizenship has raised very good provision to the standard of excellence.

33. Provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. The school itself is a resource of ethnic and cultural diversity that enriches pupils' experience. In their assembly for Black History Month Year 11 pupils showed each other the nature and consequences of racial prejudice and discrimination. In the assembly for Year 10, pupils celebrated National Poetry Day by reading and listening to poems in many languages. In geography, work on settlement and population offers pupils an understanding of what has influenced their own cultural heritage. In music, pupils experience a variety of instruments from steel pans to tablas. Drama provides further opportunities for development of sensitivity and cultural diversity. The school takes advantage of its proximity to London for visits to theatres, museums and art galleries. Links with the local community are less clear and are acknowledged to be an area for development. Also in Years 10 and 11 pupils have little experience of learning about the contribution of religion to their and other people's cultural traditions.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

34. Pastoral care was well organised at the time of the last inspection and remains so now. It is based on very good relationships and trust between pupils and adults, many of whom have a common cultural backgrounds. Staff know pupils well and respond quickly to their needs, some of which are quite complex. They ensure that new pupils settle well into school. There are good arrangements to look after those who are unwell. The school provides a secure and supportive learning environment for all groups of pupils, hence they like coming to school and are able to learn. Parents' response to the questionnaire confirmed this. The school pays good attention to pupils' needs. A strong team of learning support assistants provides good support for pupils with special educational needs and those who are at an early stage of learning English. Regular meetings are held with other agencies. An initiative from the local educational psychology service enables pupils with complex difficulties to receive structured help from their peers. Learning materials, devised by the local language service, help pupils just beginning to learn English to settle into school and start learning.
35. The school is aware of the local child protection procedures and has appropriate links with the support agencies. The deputy headteacher, the designated child protection officer, is knowledgeable about the procedures and keeps others informed of relevant matters including the needs of pupils in public care and 'child restraint'. The school is vigilant about health and safety matters and the staff pay good attention to safety. Risks are assessed but this assessment needs more rigorous monitoring. The school trips are carefully planned and the consent form that parents or carers sign provides them with space to outline any specific requirements of their children. Pupils are guided well on matters relating to their welfare, development and future through the curriculum, including the tutorials and the personal, social, citizenship and health education programme. Visiting specialists also support pupils' welfare well, for example, the sensory impairment team. A local police officer regularly comes to some lessons and talks to pupils about the aspects of the law and safety.
36. The procedures for attendance are effective in achieving good levels of attendance. Registration requirements are met and absences are appropriately identified. Absence is followed up by contacting the parents on the first day of any unexplained absence. The school works closely with the education welfare officer and has other strategies to improve attendance, including rewards for those who attend well. The deputy headteacher, who monitors absence, has a good focus on the attendance of a small number of white girls who do not attend the school regularly and promptly; she does whatever she possibly can to motivate these girls and their parents. Punctuality to the school is appropriately monitored.

37. The school promotes very good behaviour by cultivating an ethos of respect in the school and through the system of rewards and sanctions incorporated in the school's behaviour policy. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is very well managed. The school's policies on bullying and oppressive behaviour are very well understood and are exceptionally effective in eliminating any negative and anti-social behaviour; only occasionally are exclusions used as the ultimate sanction. Pupils know that all staff have high expectations of them and respond positively. Staff are very good role models.
38. The pastoral system, based on tutors, heads of year and the deputy headteacher, works very well in supporting and monitoring pupils' progress, including their personal development. Procedures for recording and monitoring inappropriate behaviour are in place. Pupils' annual progress reports, the setting of personal targets, the profile sheets which have extensive information about pupils' 'homework frequency' and 'effort' and the attendance records are particularly helpful, enabling the pastoral teams to effectively monitor pupils' work, participation and development. The tutors and heads of year make effective use of tutorials and target-setting days. Pupils' records of achievement are well used by pupils and staff: they help pupils to appreciate their accomplishments and plan for their futures.
39. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are good and much improved since the last inspection. Staff know pupils very well and have good understanding of their needs. Teachers receive information of pupils' attainments on entry and monitor their progress regularly: both are improved since the last inspection. Arrangements for assessing how pupils are getting on in their studies are generally very good but the use of the resulting information, although good overall, is not consistent across the departments. Most departments use national tests together with their own procedures for assessing pupils' progress. For example, drama makes thorough assessment against examination criteria for GCSE pupils. There are regular unit tests in geography which are reviewed at departmental meetings. Most departments make good use of assessment information in curricular planning, as in English and history. Teachers discuss with pupils their progress and how to improve their work, but detailed target setting is not yet a feature of all departments. For example, teachers in English make very good use of targets but in science pupils have only a vague idea of their target levels. In information and communication technology assessment arrangements are not satisfactory, which means younger pupils are doing work which is too easy and the attainments of all pupils across the curriculum are not monitored.
40. Arrangements for assessing the progress of pupils who receive special educational or language support are good. Assessments are regular and staff carefully gather and analyse information on pupils. Class teachers are informed of pupils' needs and contribute to monitoring their progress. Information collected is well used in planning appropriate support.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

41. The school's partnership with parents, sound at the time of the last inspection, is now good. Parents are well satisfied with the school and what it provides. They find the school approachable and feel that their children like the school, where good attitudes and behaviour are cultivated well. They say pupils are expected to work hard, receive the right amount of homework and have an interesting range of additional activities. A few parents at the pre-inspection meeting expressed concern about standards in science and reservations about the limited use of information and communication technology (for e-mails, for example). Inspection evidence endorses parents' views.
42. While parents at the pre-inspection meeting were pleased with the information they receive about their children's progress, some who returned the questionnaire were not. Inspection evidence is that the quality of information that parents receive from the school is good. Parents receive both formal and informal information about the school, such as the prospectus, the governors' annual reports and letters about particular events. The link book, pupils' progress reports, information about the curriculum in different years including coursework information in Year 10 and revision

sessions in Year 11, keep parents well informed about what their children are doing, how well they are doing and how they are supported at the school. Parents have opportunities to discuss their children's progress at the consultation evenings, held once a year. Links with parents of pupils with special educational needs are well organised. Those whose children have statements give a high level of support, in attending regular statement review meetings and showing interest in their children's progress. All these initiatives reach out to parents and enable them to influence their children's learning and progress.

43. Parents, including those who are coping with difficult circumstances, support their children's learning by motivating them and valuing education, both at Bentley Wood and post-16, for the high proportion who continue learning. The school can rely on parents' co-operation in addressing any concerns about their children's performance. Parents' attendance at consultation and curriculum meetings is good although their day-to-day involvement in the life of the school is low because many parents are not from the local area. However, fund-raising events organised by the parents, teachers and friends association are well attended by parents. Overall the impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is good.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

44. Bentley Wood High School is very effectively led and managed. High expectations and very good relationships are fostered through the personal examples of the headteacher, senior staff and people in key positions of responsibility. Leadership and management, excellent in English and very capable in several subjects - notably, mathematics, geography, history, modern foreign languages, and also in learning development - promote high standards. Since the last inspection, results and pupils' achievement have remained good, while the school's intake has become more diverse and with higher levels of need. A good range of policies, including race equality, underpins the work of the school. The school's very positive and supportive ethos successfully reflects its aim of being a learning community based on mutual respect among equal partners. It has adapted well to the changing needs of its pupils.
45. Governors have a good sense of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They are well informed by the headteacher, key staff and documentation. They are vigilant in comparing the performance of the school relative to other schools in Harrow and to all schools nationally. They show strong commitment to helping pupils with special educational needs and those starting to learn English, through the resourcing arrangements for learning development and the personal interest they show. However, links with subject departments are not systematically developed, although from time to time heads of department are invited to talk with governors.
46. The governing body does not fulfil its statutory duties satisfactorily. In three significant areas requirements are not met, as at the time of the last inspection. Religious education is correctly provided in Years 8 and 9 but, as in 1996, not for all pupils in Years 10 and 11. No progress has been made since the last inspection on the provision of collective worship. In information and communication technology some aspects of the curriculum are not provided in enough depth and only those studying GCSE business studies continue with a systematic approach to learning information technology in Years 10 and 11. On the other hand, improvements have been made in using computers in several subjects, governors have provided additional resourcing, provided more computers and refurbished accommodation.
47. Teamwork is a strength of the school, reflected in harmonious relationships. Teamwork is very good among those co-ordinating pastoral arrangements resulting in very good support for pupils - they are known individually and their progress is monitored carefully. Strong team approaches are fostered in subject teams, enabling sharing of good practice and improvement in standards - as in English, mathematics, modern foreign languages and physical education. A regular cycle of meetings, good planning and systematic documentation provide an effective framework for collaboration in most cases, but exceptions occur. In science, inconsistencies in teaching and assessment detract from pupils' learning and progress. In design and technology, good practice evident in food technology and textiles is not developed in resistant materials.
48. Working parties, with representatives from all departments, have played a strong role in improving practice in two significant areas: in teaching and learning, which are much better now than at the last inspection, and in the development of literacy. Consistent approaches in literacy have strengthened learning for all pupils, and especially those with special educational needs or at an early stage of learning English. Very good practice in literacy is a main thrust of the school's response to the Government's Key Stage 3 strategy. Provision in numeracy and science has also been strengthened (through work in mathematics and in Year 8 science) and improvements are planned across the curriculum. Practice in Years 8 and 9 in information and communication technology is too patchy and needs strengthening, urgently.
49. Senior managers, linked with departments, co-ordinate systematic approaches to monitoring teaching and providing staff development. Teachers are well supported. The analysis of results and school assessments is thorough and used effectively to raise standards overall and in most subjects - the most significant weakness being in information and communication technology, because pupils' progress is not monitored across the curriculum. The school's approach to planning improvements is good - departmental plans are consistent with those for the school and are well organised showing, for example, the action required, lead person, indicator of success

- and resources required. Plans reflect school and Government priorities. In 2002-3, for example, all subjects are planning improvements in Years 8 and 9 (Key Stage 3) and in aspects of their work which contribute to citizenship.
50. The head of learning development, recently in post, co-ordinates provision for pupils with special educational needs and for those at an early stage of learning English. This combined approach enables the school to respond to a wide range of needs. High standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Provision is now more closely matched to pupils' needs, through effective collaboration between learning support assistants and teachers. The statutory requirements outlined in pupils' statements of special educational needs are met.
 51. Resources are effectively used. Over several years careful budget planning has enabled restructuring of posts and, together with capital grants, refurbishment of aspects of accommodation. The substantial balance brought forward into this financial year is accounted for in both these ways. Contracts are evaluated for best value - for example, governors have recently agreed a combination of purchase and lease arrangements to keep computer equipment up-to-date. The extensive grounds are well maintained and a rolling programme helps to maintain the building in generally good decorative order. Recent refurbishment of science, administrative areas and rooms to create computer suites have enhanced effectiveness of these areas, although space is cramped in some information and communication technology rooms. Lessons are taught in designated subject areas, which improves the effectiveness of teaching and learning, but space is heavily used: little flexibility is available in rooming arrangements. Several aspects of accommodation need improvement, including rooms in design and technology. Shortage of space restricts opportunities in music and art and too many drama lessons take place outside of the drama studio, so pupils do not have access to specialist drama facilities. Use of the dining room is limited, because of its relative isolation. Outside, the playing fields do not drain well, which causes problems in wet weather and more indoor space is needed for physical education.
 52. Learning resources are well used, in most respects. The availability of books is good in most, but not all, areas (more books are needed in business studies). The library is excellent: it is very well stocked and managed. It is used well, both in lesson times and also for private study. The number of computers has recently been increased and they are used very well in several subjects, including English, modern foreign languages and history. However, weaknesses remain. Some machines are old and need replacement. The network does not serve the whole site. More specialist facilities are needed for teaching several applications, including control and design.
 53. Where staff absence has occurred, continuity of teaching and learning has been affected. New appointments are bringing improvements in music, art, drama and physical education. Prolonged absence of the head of information and communication technology is weakening the effect of good plans instigated before her absence. The number of teachers is average for the size of the school. They are teaching to their strengths and well deployed. Support assistants contribute well to the learning of pupils with particular needs. Their number is above average, due to extra investment made by governors in learning development, in response to the increased number of pupils with special educational needs and those learning to speak English. Support staff have specialist expertise in their own areas, so they contribute very effectively to the work of the school - as librarian, network manager, school manager and in administration. Appropriate use is made of management information systems, for example, in budget-planning and analysing results. Among the staff are people from many ethnic backgrounds and they provide good role models in this multi-cultural school.
 54. The school has effectively maintained good standards since the last inspection. Teaching is substantially better and pupils make much better progress up to the end of Year 9. More effective use is made of assessment by senior managers and in several subjects, but practice could be more consistent, in information and communication technology particularly. The three significant weaknesses reported now were also reported on at the last inspection.

55. Bearing in mind the amount of money coming into the school, which is broadly average, the good academic progress pupils make and their personal development which is very good, the school provides good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

56. *To raise further the standards of work, attainment and progress of pupils, the governors, headteacher, senior leadership team and staff should:*

- (1) strengthen curricular provision and assessment of pupils' attainment and progress in information and communication technology (paragraphs 4,19, 24, 46 and 128-131);
- (2) provide religious education for all pupils in Years 10 and 11 (paragraphs 4, 24, 46, 159 and 161);
- (3) take steps to provide collective worship (paragraphs 30 and 46).

In addition to the preceding areas for improvement, the following less significant weaknesses need attention: provision in resistant materials (paragraph 104); and inconsistencies in the use of assessment in science (paragraphs 84 and 87). Aspects of accommodation need improvement (paragraph 51) and resources for information and communication technology (paragraphs 52, 133 and 134).

The development of information and communication technology across the curriculum was a key issue of the last report. Weakness in provision of religious education for all pupils in Years 10 and 11 and lack of collective worship were also reported.

The school is well aware of its strengths and areas for improvement. Plans include improvement of information and communication technology. Provision of short-course religious studies is mentioned in plans for 2004.

PROVISION FOR ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

57. The number of pupils at an early stage of learning English has risen steadily since the last inspection. Many of these are refugees, mainly from Somalia, but few have arrived recently in Britain. Planned support is provided for those at an early stage of learning English. At the inspection, three pupils were just beginning to learn English and 60 were at various levels of fluency, but still needing help to cope with their learning in lessons.
58. The pupils learning to speak English achieve well. On entry, pupils' levels of English are assessed. Progress continues to be monitored until they are fully fluent. Those not fully fluent still contribute to the good GCSE results. Records indicate good progress, with numbers of pupils reaching high levels at the end of Year 9 and proceeding onto GCSE courses. Pupils are not held back by lack of English since they are well motivated.
59. Learning support assistants provide good support in lessons for pupils at an early stage of learning English. Within the support team, ten community languages are spoken so support assistants can often help in particular difficulties. Support assistants often work in particular subject areas and are familiar with the subject matter. In a Year 11 science lesson, pupils received very good support because the learning support assistant knew the materials and the demands of the GCSE double award science course well. Very good glossary and vocabulary sheets have been prepared for science. English teachers are very successful in teaching pupils just starting to learn English because they plan to include them in the lesson, provide very useful information sheets and arrange for other pupils to support them in group work. This enabled one pupil who had been learning English for only a few weeks to communicate in writing effectively, in spite of weak spelling and grammar. In other subjects, in humanities especially, simplified worksheets, connected to the main topic, have been developed. These enable pupils to follow the lesson and to keep up. In all lessons, pupils who need help are known to teachers and receive individual attention.

60. Curricular provision is good. Pupils who speak little or no English when they enter school receive an induction pack about school life. Where possible, pupils are placed in a tutor group with another pupil who speaks her language. She has individual or small group lessons and can join a literacy group in Year 9. The lunchtime study support room also functions as a 'drop-in' centre for pupils who may need help, support or a temporary refuge.
61. The curriculum has been adapted well for older pupils who are still initial learners or lack fluency. At the beginning of Year 10, pupils can choose a support option instead of a GCSE subject, giving them extra time for coursework. In English, mathematics and science, pupils can take a certificate of achievement instead of, or in addition, to GCSE examinations. All are successful in gaining certificates of achievement. Other arrangements include entering a pupil who has arrived in Year 11 for a short GCSE course or offering a certificate provided by the school. For pupils who continue to need considerable help in language learning, there is a certificated course based on developing life and work-related skills. In a Year 10 life-skills lesson, a pupil found the confidence to produce several sentences of her own for the first time. Individual arrangements are made where appropriate. For example, one or two pupils whose previous learning has been disrupted are placed in younger classes, where this enables them to establish a firm foundation for their learning.
62. The school values its diversity of languages. In a modern language lesson, the teacher drew on the experiences of pupils by asking them how a phrase would be said in their native language. Their knowledge is valued. The school display on refugees and asylum seekers provides an excellent factual explanation for the background of many pupils. The library includes a section of bilingual books.
63. The organisation of the English as an additional language section of the learning development department runs smoothly, despite the vacant post of responsibility for English as an additional language. The distinctions in the assessment of pupils with special educational or language needs (although a few have both) are clearly drawn. Learning support assistants often support both those with special needs and those who need support in learning English in the same class. In the context of this school where pupils support one another very well, this represents efficient deployment of staff. Accommodation is satisfactory although no base-room is available for the sole use of English learners who need specific support. The school supplements specific language funds substantially from its general budget. Parents are well satisfied with the school. The department is concerned to make good links and participates in a Harrow project 'Listening to Somali parents'. Management is good and has established systematic provision for pupils who are at an early stage of learning English. This represents substantial improvement since the last inspection

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	162
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	47

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	48	68	42	0	1	0
Percentage	2	29	42	26	0	1	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y8 – Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	712
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	194

Special educational needs	Y8 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	9
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	144

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	429

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	34
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	20

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.4
National comparative data	8.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4
National comparative data	1.1

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage (Year 9)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002 (01)	N/A	181 (181)	181 (181)

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Girls	142 (145)	123 (126)	115 (127)
	Total	142 (145)	123 (126)	115 (127)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	78 (80)	68 (70)	64 (70)
	National	(64)	(66)	(66)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	39 (48)	52 (54)	29 (40)
	National	(31)	(43)	(34)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Girls	116 (128)	119 (117)	126 (133)
	Total	(128)	(117)	(133)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	64 (71)	66 (65)	70 (73)
	National	(65)	(68)	(64)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	30 (41)	43 (48)	30 (34)
	National	(31)	(42)	(33)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002 (01)	N/A	173 (184)	173 (184)

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	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Girls	98 (121)	157 (178)	169 (180)
	Total	98 (121)	157 (178)	169 (180)
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	57 (66)	91 (97)	98 (98)
	National	(48)	(91)	(96)

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

GCSE results	GCSE point score
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Average point score per pupil	School	40 (44)
	National	(39.0)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	148	17	0
White – Irish	3	0	0
White – any other White background	41	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	17	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	2	2	0
Mixed – White and Asian	5	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	1	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	159	1	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	65	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	9	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	52	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	47	15	0
Black or Black British – African	60	6	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	2	0	0
Chinese	7	0	0
Any other ethnic group	100	7	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Financial information

Qualified teachers and classes: Y8 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	43.25
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.28

Education support staff: Y8 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	318

Deployment of teachers: Y8 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	68.7
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Average teaching group size: Y8 – Y11

Key Stage 3	28
Key Stage 4	23.6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial year	2001-02
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	£
Total income	2,492,701
Total expenditure	2,296,213
Expenditure per pupil	3,225
Balance brought forward from previous year	16,607
Balance carried forward to next year	213,095

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	14.2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	20

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	6
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	5
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	712
Number of questionnaires returned	158

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	45	47	6	0	2
My child is making good progress in school.	41	46	2	0	11
Behaviour in the school is good.	49	38	5	2	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	46	45	4	2	3
The teaching is good.	40	46	6	0	8
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	38	41	9	1	11
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	55	38	4	0	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	27	1	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	30	54	4	2	10
The school is well led and managed.	46	42	1	0	11
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	50	35	3	1	11
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	58	34	3	1	4

Other issues raised by parents

Parents are well satisfied with the school and what it provides. Only 14 parents attended the pre-inspection meeting. Their views were very similar to those shown by the questionnaire, except at the meeting:

- parents were fully supportive of the information the school provides
- a few expressed concern about pupils' progress in science and their limited use of information and communication technology.

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

ENGLISH

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

Strengths

- Teaching is very good which helps pupils of all abilities to achieve very well;
- Pupils' attitudes to work are very good; they show initiative and take responsibility for their own learning;
- Leadership and management are excellent; there is a firm commitment by all teachers to raise standards even further.

Area for improvement

- The proportion of pupils achieving the highest grades A*/A in the GCSE English language examination, which is not as high as that in English literature.

64. Results in the 2001 National Curriculum tests were well above the average for all schools nationally, above the average for girls and very high in comparison with those of similar schools. This represents very good achievement to the end of Year 9 relative to pupils' attainment on entry, which is below average. In 2002, results matched the 2001 average for girls. Over the years 1999-2001, results have fluctuated a little but have remained average or above. Pupils do better in English than they do in mathematics and science.
65. Results in the 2001 GCSE examination in English language were well above those of all schools nationally and above those of girls. They were very high in comparison with those of similar schools. This represents very good achievement relative to these pupils' results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9. Results are similar to those of recent years. In English literature, results in 2001 were a little above the national average for girls and similar to those of previous years. In both English language and English literature, the proportion of pupils gaining the highest grades A*/A was a little below average. Pupils do about as well in English as in their other subjects.
66. Inspection evidence confirms pupils' very good achievement in English, by the end of Year 9 and 11. In lessons and work seen standards in Year 9 are above average. Pupils speak fluently and with confidence, using wide-ranging vocabulary which helps them develop their ideas fully. For example, when discussing the characters Link and Shelter in *Stone Cold*, pupils explain their attitudes to them, with evidence from the text. While pupils with learning or language difficulties speak more briefly they communicate straightforward points clearly. Pupils listen very well to teachers and to one another in small group work, respecting what others say and providing supportive comments. They read accurately and sometimes with expression, especially when interpreting direct speech. Their response to questions shows they understand what they read and appreciate how language can be used to create character. For example, they notice the military terms used by the author Swindells in his descriptions of Shelter. In library lessons, pupils develop good reading habits and present books to the class by reading brief extracts and explaining why they would recommend the book to others. Pupils write confidently and accurately in various formats such as letters, poems, book reviews and autobiography. They write in the character of Malvolio (*Twelfth Night*), and in discursive essays debate issues such as whether girls learn best in all-girls' schools. Work is carefully presented in paragraphs with varied sentence structures and effective vocabulary. Although lower attaining pupils struggle with expression at times, they communicate meaning clearly.
67. In Year 11, pupils' work is well above average. Pupils sustain a conversation and engage in lively discussion, as when talking in groups about the attitudes of Mr Birling and his daughter to the death of Eva Smith in *An Inspector Calls*, or evaluating the pigs' behaviour in *Animal Farm*. They formulate opinions, build on others' ideas and ask telling questions. In groups and in whole class

activities, pupils listen closely because they are eager to learn and are interested in the work. Pupils read aloud fluently and expressively – for example, when reading a part in *Hobson's Choice* or *An Inspector Calls*. Their subsequent discussion shows that they have followed the plot carefully and understood why characters act as they do. Pupils appreciate the impact of devices such as simile, metaphor and irony, although lower attaining pupils tend to take words at their face value. In Years 10 and 11, writing becomes more extensive and is closely linked to GCSE coursework requirements. In creative work, pupils write poems inspired by reading Jeni Couzyn's poetry and show considerable sensitivity to language. In informative and discursive writing on 'Pollution', they adopt a suitably formal style, achieving clarity of expression. Having read Maya Angelou's *Phenomenal Woman* and *Still I Rise*, they compare the content and style of these two poems. Others reflect on the message of Sujala Bhatt's *A Search for My Tongue* and Moniza Alvis's *Presents from My Aunts in Pakistan*. Pupils analyse how far Macbeth was responsible for his own downfall, and take on the character of Scout in *To Kill A Mockingbird*, telling how she hated her first days at school. Writing is accurate and well structured. Pupils work hard at redrafting and do not confuse proof-reading with drafting. Many pupils write with flair and enthusiasm. Lower attaining pupils use more simple sentence structures, and in literature essays do not always explain the significance of quotations nor offer reasons to substantiate opinion. Presentation is very good, often enhanced by word-processing.

68. Teaching and learning are very good and great strengths of the department. Pupils achieve so well because they are taught with considerable skill and commitment. Teachers have extensive knowledge and understanding of their subject. This enables them to ask questions which encourage pupils to think more deeply and to assess how much pupils have learnt. Teachers plan lessons very carefully to include an interesting variety of activities, as in Year 8 lessons on the origins of the English language. In many lessons, group work is a central feature and all pupils are fully engaged emotionally and sometimes physically. In an excellent Year 11 lesson, for example, the teacher set up role plays based on the high court scene in *The Merchant of Venice* where Shylock is refused his pound of flesh. Close collaboration between pupils – and the opportunity to discuss different interpretations – led to very rapid learning about the characters of Shylock and Antonio. The teacher used the activity for oral assessment and as a preliminary to a piece of coursework. This gave pupils a keen sense of purpose and spurred them on to perform impressively. Relationships are excellent. Teachers allow pupils to use initiative and say how a task might be carried out, fostering pupils' very good attitudes to their work. They concentrate hard and respond readily to questions. Teachers have very high expectations of the standards pupils should reach in both work and behaviour. As a result, pupils develop very good independent learning skills because teachers trust them to work in groups, sometimes outside the classroom, and very good learning is achieved. Teachers vary the way they present a topic and this sustains interest. For example, in an excellent Year 9 lesson, pupils used computers to draft entries for a 'Vampire Handbook' as part of a unit of work on Gothic Horror. The teacher's crystal-clear instructions and close monitoring of the task enabled pupils to work at a very rapid pace and produce work of high quality. Lessons are well structured, although occasionally a hurried ending limits the impact of teaching on learning. Homework is regularly set and arises naturally out of the lesson. Teachers mark work conscientiously, placing strong emphasis on accuracy of expression and giving carefully phrased comments which encourage pupils and show them how to improve. This accounts for the high levels of literacy in pupils' work.
69. The schemes of work offer pupils a broad curriculum. Good account is taken of the National Literacy Strategy and the recently introduced Key Stage 3 National Strategy – for example, in the planning for starter activities in lessons, and key words prominently displayed in classrooms. Good use is made of information and communications technology, which is an integral feature of certain schemes of work. For example, Year 8 create newspaper reports on the dispute between the Montagus and Capulets in *Romeo and Juliet*, and Year 9 design advertisements including pictures from the Internet. Drama activities such as role-play and hot-seating add a further dimension to learning experiences. For example, in a Year 10 lesson, learning was well promoted by group work in which pupils improvised scenes from *An Inspector Calls*. Pupils with language or learning difficulties benefit from very good provision through simplified worksheets, careful grouping in lessons and very well focused support from learning support assistants. The English department makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural

development through opportunities given to pupils to understand how others feel – as in studies of *Stone Cold* and *Of Mice and Men*. Many opportunities arise to evaluate behaviour and motivation, in plays such as *Macbeth* and *Othello*, and to participate in group work. Teachers are excellent role models in the respect they show to pupils and the clarity of their instructions on worksheets. Assessment procedures are very good. Teachers keep full records of pupils' achievements, so progress is easy to track; data amassed are very effectively used to modify schemes of work to address weaknesses.

70. Leadership and management are outstandingly good. The head of department is a teacher of considerable expertise, who leads by example and constantly seeks to raise attainment. Because the number of pupils achieving A*/A grades in the 2002 GCSE English language examination was lower than in English literature, attention is to be given to challenging the highest attaining pupils even more. The head of department is excellently supported by a group of enthusiastic teachers who work very closely as a team and offer strong support to newcomers, such as a recently appointed temporary teacher. Lesson visits, regular meetings and the moderation of pupils' best work enable the head of department to monitor efficiently what is happening in English. Improvement since the last inspection is excellent. All shortcomings have been rectified. For example, all pupils with special educational needs now achieve very well. Pupils are encouraged to read widely and computers are used much more extensively. Attainment, achievement, teaching and learning are now significantly better.

Literacy

71. Standards of literacy are above average. The literacy co-ordinator has worked hard to monitor the attention various departments give to literacy in their teaching and to provide whole school training. Links between literacy development and support for pupils with special educational or language needs strengthens provision. All departments have a literacy target in their subject improvement plans. Very good strategies are in place and are beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' learning.
72. In English, pupils have many opportunities to read aloud and to discuss the text. The schemes of work offer a wide variety of writing tasks involving formal and non-formal expression and different formats such as diary entries, reflective writing and letters. Good attention to literacy is evident in other subjects. Key words are displayed in many classrooms and are well used in history, food technology and textiles. However, in science, they are not referred to often enough and not closely linked to their meanings. Subject areas give pupils many opportunities to use technical vocabulary; this is particularly strong in geography. The Bentley Wood Word Bank booklet gives pupils a very good guide to the language of each subject studied. Opportunities to read aloud arise in business education, science and history, but they are absent from many other subjects. A wide range of writing is practised across the curriculum, although there are not enough opportunities for pupils to develop extended writing skills in music and religious education, and variety of writing in modern foreign languages in Years 8 and 9. Pupils evaluate their work in food technology, textiles and drama. In art, while pupils comment on the work of great artists, not enough chances are given for pupils to write creatively, although note-taking is well practised. Research topics on pollution in science allow pupils to write formally, and in mathematics pupils develop lines of enquiry, writing up conclusions of their findings. The marking policy is followed in most departments, but it is not observed consistently in science, where technical errors sometimes go uncorrected.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- Pupils' achievements are good and improving: their results at the end of Year 9 are in line with the national average and at GCSE are above average;

- The most able pupils attain highly;
- Teaching and learning are good overall;
- Pupils work well with their teachers and each other.

Areas for improvement

- Assessment: pupils do not receive enough information on their progress, relative to national standards;
- Opportunities for pupils to improve their investigative and problem solving skills which are not frequent enough.

73. Results of the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 in recent years have been broadly in line with the national average when compared with all schools. While results dipped in 2000 to below the national average, in 2001 results improved and were above the national average, both when compared with all schools and with girls' schools, and results were very high in comparison with similar schools. Results were similarly good in 2002, with a high proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels (6 and 7). Overall, relative to the attainment levels on entry to the school, pupils make good progress. Pupils' performance in mathematics is not as good as in English but is a little better than in science. The overall trend is of improvement in mathematics results at the end of Year 9.
74. GCSE results are above the national averages for all schools and for girls. In 2001, the proportion of pupils gaining the highest grades, (A*-C), was above the average when compared with all schools. Across the full range of grades, (A*-G), the results were broadly in line with national averages. The proportion of pupils gaining A*/A grades was above the average for all schools. Results in 2002, overall, were close to those in 2000. The proportion of pupils gaining A*/A grades was about double the average nationally for 2001. Overall, pupils' achievement, relative to their attainment at the end of Year 9, was good.
75. Standards in lessons and in the work seen in Years 8 and 9 during the inspection were broadly in line with national expectations: they progress well. Year 9 pupils are in line to achieve average standards at the end of the year. The more able pupils attain above the national expectation; for example, they understand and use the rule of Pythagoras to solve problems, use standard methods to calculate averages and extend their knowledge and skills in the use of trigonometrical ratios. Middle attaining pupils use number skills effectively to calculate the areas and volumes of shapes. When using Pythagoras' rule in right angled triangles they are more successful in calculating squares of numbers than the square roots. Lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, consolidate their understanding and skills in number calculations, including fractions and decimals. They are less competent when using algebraic terms and equations. When pupils who speak little English are supported they make progress at the same rate as other pupils. In Years 10 and 11, overall standards are above the national expectation. Pupils in the higher attaining groups attain above while others are closer to the national expectation. Progress is good. Higher attaining pupils complete more challenging tasks which include the use of the sine rule and other trigonometrical ratios in triangles. While middle attaining pupils appear more tentative in their approach to learning they effectively check on previous work to help them in class activities as observed, for example, in work relating to constructions to help them find the locus of points. The lowest attaining pupils seek greater support from their teachers in class and their progress is slower. Occasionally, when too little time is spent at the end of lessons to help reinforce the learning of the lesson, the lowest attaining pupils have difficulty in recalling their work.
76. The quality of the teaching is good overall and occasionally very good; it is never less than satisfactory. Teachers plan and structure lessons well; occasionally not enough time is left towards the end to emphasise and consolidate the key learning points of the lesson. This can slow down pupils' progress. Teachers' very good class management skills help to create a positive climate for learning in which pupils fully participate, for example, in discussion and in varied lesson activities. An overall strength among teachers in the department is their good subject knowledge which enables them to explain work clearly and sequentially; pupils are helped to learn systematically. Homework helps to reinforce pupils' learning. It is planned and in keeping with the school's homework policy. Pupils' learning is closely linked to the quality of teaching. For example, in a Year 11 lesson the teacher's good choice of activity to start the lesson helped both to improve pupils' mental number skills and also to review their learning from the previous lesson.

They substituted numbers in equations to determine the co-ordinates using positive and negative values. The teacher's good knowledge of the subject enabled her to ask probing questions and also to respond effectively to pupils' own questions. Pupils were able to determine the gradient and intercept values from the equations and to illustrate them using graphs: they learned well. Pupils' progress is monitored through regular use of class assessments. Their class work and homework are regularly marked using an agreed system of marks. However, comments to help pupils improve their work are brief and little use is made of the National Curriculum levels; pupils are unable to assess their own progress relative to the performance of pupils nationally. Pupils' attitudes to learning are always good or better. They are interested in their work and keen to improve standards. They focus well on tasks, participate fully in all of the lessons' activities by responding to questions and contributing to discussions in groups, as well as working independently. Relationships between the pupils and their teachers are excellent. Pupils are always respectful and courteous. They are supportive of each other and their behaviour is excellent.

77. Pupils with special educational needs and those at an early stage of learning English make good progress when they are individually supported. However, not all of these pupils have individual support in all of their mathematics lessons; without support their progress is impeded. Very good teaching was observed in a Year 8 class of low ability pupils. They were enthusiastically engaged in a variety of activities to improve their number skills, mentally and in writing; they concentrated throughout the lesson, helped by the teacher's high level of skill in managing the group and because step by step planning effectively took account of the different learning difficulties they encountered. They consolidated their understanding of multiples and improved their proficiency in multiplying and dividing numbers by multiples of ten, both mentally and in writing, for example, 20 times 30. They made good progress.
78. Mathematics is managed very well. Teamwork is good and teachers share in the work of the department. The new schemes of work take account of the Government's Key Stage 3 strategy and include activities to improve pupils' numeracy skills and make more use of computers. Underachievement is carefully monitored. Extensive revision materials are used in Years 9 and 11 to help raise the attainment levels of pupils in end of year tests and in the GCSE examinations. Appropriate priorities have been identified in the department's development plan but some weaknesses remain. For example, little use made of National Curriculum levels and too few opportunities are provided for pupils to develop investigative and problem solving skills.
79. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. The changes made to the curriculum strengthen pupils' use of number mentally and in writing, extend the use of computers and allow teachers to use a greater variety of teaching methods. Calculators are now used appropriately although not all pupils have their own; this puts pressure on the school's resources and pupils often have to share. Overall, resource provision is good; there is some sharing of textbooks in class but all pupils have their own workbooks for homework purposes.

Numeracy

80. Pupils' standards of numeracy are good, overall. Activities to strengthen numeracy skills feature in the mathematics schemes of work in Years 8 and 9. A published programme is used to help lowest attaining pupils to catch-up in Year 8. The pupils are well motivated and focus well on the varied tasks. They make good progress. Mathematics teachers use many opportunities in Years 10 and 11 to encourage and reinforce pupils' mental number skills in different contexts including algebraic calculations. They have undertaken training in numeracy which has had beneficial effect on approaches to teaching in the department.
81. However, no whole school strategy is in place to improve pupils' number skills across other subjects. Nevertheless, numeracy is well used in some subjects. In science, number is used effectively with younger pupils to calculate speed and with older pupils when balancing chemical equations. Pupils interpret data from tables, surveys and graphs in both history and geography; standards are good. Also in geography, pupils collect data in a variety of forms and use percentages when constructing pie-charts; standards are good. Plans are in place for the training

of other teachers from a range of subjects to promote and improve pupils' skills in the use of number.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- Pupils achieve well in Years 8 and 10.
- In the best lessons:
pupils respond very well to teachers' high expectations;
teachers help pupils to learn by using good subject knowledge in giving clear explanations.

Areas for improvement

- Provide appropriately challenging work for all pupils by improving the consistency of teaching and learning;
- Use assessment more effectively to set short term targets for individual pupils;
- Mark more consistently so that pupils know how to improve.

82. The results of National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 in 2001 were in line with the national averages for all schools nationally and for girls, and were well above those for schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. This was a marked improvement after several years of decline. GCSE results at the end of Year 11 were above the national averages in 2001, for all schools and for girls, representing good progress for these pupils in relation to their National Curriculum test results two years earlier. Results in 2002, while significantly lower, are likely to be in line with the national average. Long-term staff absence had necessitated a number of temporary appointments and resulted in lack of continuity in pupils' learning. Pupils did not do as well in science examinations as in English and mathematics.
83. Standards seen in lessons and written work were average in Years 9 and 11, reflecting the most recent examination results. Although pupils' achievement in lessons is satisfactory overall, progress tails off in Years 9 and 11; it is not as good as that in Years 8 and 10. Pupils with special educational needs and those who are learning to speak English are well supported and make good progress as a result. Gifted and talented pupils are not given enough encouragement to move beyond the basic lesson content, but make satisfactory progress overall.
84. When pupils enter the school in Year 8 standards are a little below average. Most can describe differences between solids, liquids and gases, but are unable to use the idea of particles to explain the differences they observe. They achieve well in Year 8. Although their achievement is less good in Year 9, they reach standards in line with the average nationally by the end of the year. For example, most know how plant roots are adapted to obtain the maximum amount of water and why this is essential to the plant. However, standards are not as high as they should be in Year 9 because some teachers, particularly those new to the school, do not match work closely enough to the wide range of pupils' abilities. Higher attaining pupils are often not challenged enough and the pace of working is sometimes too slow. In Year 10, pupils are grouped by ability; teachers' expectations are much more closely matched to their prior attainment and they achieve well. However, overall achievement falls back again in Year 11 because most groups contain pupils with widely varying abilities and teachers do not always ensure that work is appropriately challenging for individuals.
85. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, but there is marked variation. About one third of the lessons observed were good or better; almost all the rest were satisfactory, but lessons are occasionally poor. Key features of teaching in good and very good lessons are high expectations of what can be achieved, clear explanations that build pupils' knowledge step by step and questioning that encourages them to think about underlying principles. The teacher used questioning very effectively in Year 9 to help pupils see the relationship between plant root structure and the quantity of water that can be absorbed. In Year 11, the teacher made clear that pupils needed to concentrate throughout a double lesson and that they were expected to understand and then apply their learning about the difficult concept of energy changes in chemical reactions; pupils responded very well to this challenge and many were eager to learn even more.

In other lessons, some groups of pupils do not learn enough. This was the case during an investigation of reaction rates in Year 11; lower attaining pupils could not progress because they were unable to make the connection between particle size and surface area, while a group of more able pupils finished quickly and were not encouraged to further their learning by considering alternative factors that might affect reaction rate. Marking of pupils' written work is inconsistent across the department. About half the teachers make detailed comments showing pupils how they can improve, while others mark superficially or leave work unmarked.

86. In developing pupils' literacy skills, teachers often refer to key words, such as 'filter' and 'photosynthesis', but the words are not always closely enough associated with their meanings for pupils to use them effectively in describing their work or recalling earlier work. Pupils' information and communication technology skills are not well developed in science, partly because the department lacks the equipment needed for practical experience, for example, in measuring change of temperature with time. Teachers make good use of the many opportunities in science lessons to develop pupils' numerical skills, as when Year 10 pupils looked for patterns and anomalies in numerical results after investigating how the length of a wire affects its electrical resistance.
87. While day-to-day arrangements work smoothly, departmental management has not ensured satisfactory improvement since the last inspection; many of the deficiencies that were mentioned then still remain. There is too much inconsistency in teaching and learning across the department, partly because recent staff changes have inhibited development. The school timetable does not serve the department well, making it difficult to group pupils in ways that best promote their learning. Assessment is not used effectively enough to set short term targets for individual pupils, and aspects of scientific enquiry are not firmly enough embedded in day-to-day teaching. However, the department benefits from support by the local education authority advisor for science and has recently been restructured. With its more stable teaching staff, it is already well advanced in implementing ideas from the new framework for science teaching in Years 8 and 9, forming a core of good practice to facilitate improvement across the whole department.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- Good teaching of drawing and painting skills;
- Pupils learn to evaluate and improve the quality of their work;
- Pupils with special educational needs are included fully and achieve well;
- Homework is well used to extend learning;
- The curriculum includes a good range of experiences.

Areas for improvement

- Ensure examination preparation is thorough and consistent with requirements;
- Raise the standards achieved in art, so pupils do as well in art as in their other subjects;
- Develop the use of information and communication technology.

88. Over most of the last six years GCSE results have been above the national averages, both for all school and for girls. This pattern has been evident since the last inspection, when art and design results were consistently good. In 2001, GCSE grades dropped although they were still above the national average. They were, however, relatively low compared with other subjects in the school. Predicted grades varied significantly from those judged by the examination board. As a consequence, all pupils expecting the highest grades were marked down a level. In 2002, GCSE results dropped further and were grouped among the weakest subjects in the school. When compared with national averages for girls over the last two years, results in art and design were only a little below average. The main reason for disappointing results was the change of examination board in between the mock examination and the final papers. Lack of familiarity with

examination preparation and the new requirements accentuated difficulties at a most inopportune time. However, the department is now both aware of the difficulties and making changes. Standards of work during the inspection were satisfactory. Although on entry in Year 8, standards are weak, by the end of Years 9 and 11 they are average. The climate is good for learning; pupils are well motivated and achieve satisfactorily. Pupils with special educational needs are included fully in all activities, support for those with statements is well planned and effective. For example, a pupil with autism was observed drawing and shading using vivid colour to produce work of above average standard.

89. By the end of Year 9, pupils are producing creative work in two and three dimensions. Some very good paintings illustrate thoughtful progression from looking at and sketching the work of Picasso and Van Gogh to recreating their styles in unique individual compositions. Pupils' own evaluations describe exactly what has been learned about tone, shade, shadow and proportion. Sketching and note-taking about the visual characteristics of water inspire good abstract paintings. A number of pupils reflect critically on their work. Where observation skills are less well developed some drawing is immature and paintings are less successful. In pottery, a similar process based on observation is used. Pupils learn by practising, looking and reviewing and readily praise the work they admire in their groups. Patterns based on African designs are composed leading to experiments to make impressed patterns in clay tiles. Skills vary, but overall standards are in line with national expectations. All attempt some writing about the ingredients in clay. The use of information and communication technology is less well developed; little progress has been made since the last inspection and the art department is at an early stage in developing the use of information technology to enhance pupils' learning. Some painted black and white prints support the development of portraiture skills and pupils who have computers at home use them for research and to extend school resources.
90. By the end of Year 11, pupils are using sketchbooks effectively, developing techniques of realistic drawing and they create interesting compositions. Work on display shows colourful surreal paintings which cleverly relate pupils' own work to that of Roy Lichtenstein and Andy Warhol. A fascinating range of products shows that a number of pupils have good ideas and can realise them as art objects: soft sculptures, a giant watch, spectacles and a fabric Hoover. Among some pupils weak drawing skills prevent them from achieving the level they want and some have only limited understanding of how to make an image 'surreal'. A few are reluctant to experiment or respond to questions and lack skills when using paint to mix colours.
91. Teaching and learning are good. Reading, writing, discussion and research are fundamental to the art lessons. Pupils write definitions and learn to evaluate their sketches. At best procedures of stop, look, question, think and evaluate are practised in all lessons. Pupils are taught how to draw and about line and shape. A very good technique using mirror images to produce a line drawing offers an interesting challenge. They learn how they perceive colour. Demonstration shows how to experiment with, for example, a stencil edge, smudging and scraffito with chalk, wax and oil crayons. Prompt sheets define the sequence of lesson tasks and tactfully assist those with special educational needs. Good daily planning relates well to medium and long-term plans so that all elements of the art curriculum are addressed over the year. Expectations are high and behaviour well managed so that large classes work successfully in a very cramped environment. When prompted, pupils talk sensitively about references to idolatry and how patterns are part of their own religious beliefs. Building on the wealth of the pupils' cultural background is intended and included in plans but explicit reference to the spiritual element of the subject is undeveloped in lessons. In a few lessons teaching is less effective because lessons start slowly or are a little disorganised and their endings are less well structured. Pupils with special educational needs are included well. For example, a blind pupil has produced some impressive work on portraiture, including a face in three dimensions and a tactile collage. Pupils have a good rapport with their teachers. They respond immediately to the quiet but firm insistence on expected standards of behaviour. They listen willingly to teachers and to each other. Work is assessed regularly and pupils' opinions are sought and included. Homework is set in two-week blocks and supports the lesson content well. It also supplements the good use of sketchbooks and teaches research skills effectively. The majority of pupils have their sketchbooks with them in lessons and refer to them as an important part of course work. They are consistently encouraged to evaluate work

against lesson objectives and discuss with each other the successes and improvements they could make. Visits to various places of interest, museums and galleries are well subscribed. For example, the Tate Modern, Tate Britain, and the Victoria and Albert Museum have been visited on Saturdays. An after-school art club is increasing in popularity and pupils can use this extra time to improve their examination course work. Good links with the community are maintained. The school has artwork exhibited in the local Teachers' Centre, the railway station and the Harrow Arts Centre.

92. The acting head of art has only been in post since September. He has made a positive start to development and plans for improvement. A concise and informative analysis of the examination problems is providing a basis for improvement. Regular meetings are held and the minutes record issues important to the department, for example, better use of assessment at the end of Year 9 and of evaluation at the end of projects. Staff training on judging work relative to national expectations is planned and the establishment of formal assessment at the end of Year 9 is underway. Tracking of pupil progress has started this term and evaluation sheets prompt pertinent questions for pupils such as 'why is this piece of work better?' and 'what could improve the work?' Teacher assessments include suggestions for extension work. Art rooms are cramped and the open plan arrangement while enabling classes to see the work others produce, creates problems of noise and interruption. The school library supports the department well and termly planning informs the selection and purchase of relevant resources for learning.
93. Since the last inspection the art department has had to take account of the reduction in its success in examination standards. Staff changes have had an impact on management and teaching and although present teaching and management are good it will take time for this to impact on learning and results. The structure and appropriate plans for change and improvement are in place.

CITIZENSHIP

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

Strengths

- Pupils show good responsibility towards each other and to the community;
- They are developing good enquiry skills.

Areas for improvement

- Implement planned improvements throughout the curriculum and in assessing and reporting pupils' progress.

94. Pupils are achieving well. They develop a good sense of responsibility towards each other and the community by the end of Year 9. In a Year 8 lesson on rights and responsibilities pupils organised themselves sensibly and appreciated that their own work may bring consequences. Year 9 pupils, learning about central government, gained valuable insights into the working of government and their rights as citizens. The topic of human rights explored by Year 10 pupils enabled them to distinguish rights from wants, to learn how rights developed and to test the concept of rights. Pupils develop good enquiry skills, readily share their views, express opinions and are supportive about the views of others. In a Year 11 lesson on post-16 choices, pupils made very good progress in understanding both the local arrangements and also the national structure of qualifications and how they could further their own aims. Standards are reinforced by work in all subjects, notably in history (when Year 9 pupils presented the viewpoints of factory owners and reformers and achieved highly); geography (when Year 10 pupils explored the concept of land use in towns and cities and achieved well); and English (where pupils achieve good levels of understanding of the ideas and issues underlying books such as *Animal Farm* and *Of Mice and Men*).

95. The quality of the teaching of citizenship is good, with some good and very good features. Teachers are very well prepared for lessons, and pupils respond enthusiastically: many instances of their active participation were seen. For example, a group of Year 11 pupils were totally involved in a discussion of what it was like to be wheel-chair-bound, and came up with a number of suggestions on how wheel-chair access in the school could be improved. In a tutorial lesson, a Year 10 class was observed discussing how chocolate could be marketed, and what the implication of their marketing techniques would have on the underdeveloped countries that were producing the cocoa beans. A Year 11 assembly, in celebration of 'Black History Month', engendered a lively discussion about racist issues. Pupils' well-developed social and moral skills are demonstrated in lessons, such as when a group of Year 10 girls in a basketball lesson gave highly sensitive and effective help to another pupil, who is visually impaired, and throughout the life of the school, where the climate is harmonious and happy.
96. The subject was introduced at the beginning of the autumn term 2002, in line with national developments. Aspects are being delivered by most subjects as well as in personal, social, citizenship and health education lessons and tutorial lessons. The citizenship working party has produced a very comprehensive list of topics that will be covered in these lessons. In addition, pupils are learning the skills of active citizenship and political literacy through a series of tutorials which have encouraged pupils of all abilities and backgrounds to make their voice heard and which provide opportunities for participation in school decision making, such as in school council meetings.
97. The school has generously resourced and thoroughly prepared for the introduction of the new subject. Elements of citizenship: political literacy, social and moral responsibility and community participation strongly underpin the school's ethos and provide a very sound basis for the content of the school's citizenship curriculum. The detailed audit that was carried out on the school's curriculum to ascertain how much of the new syllabus was already being covered revealed that many of its demands were already being met. A member of staff was appointed to be responsible for the subject and a working party created to investigate how this new aspect of the curriculum was to be introduced. Much time, energy and professional skill has been used to create a large bank of information, literature and work sheets which are helping teachers to successfully deliver citizenship lessons. Form tutors are responsible for tutorial lessons with their forms and a group of designated teachers delivers specific aspects of the personal, social, citizenship and health education curriculum. Teachers are supported by an impressive list of outside speakers.
98. Citizenship is very capably organised by the subject co-ordinator. He has been responsible for the creation of the excellent range of resources and teaching aids that have ensured the successful introduction of the subject. Further improvements are planned and will embed citizenship in the school's provision; for example, all subjects are identifying relevant opportunities in their schemes of work and pupils' progress will be assessed and recorded in annual reports to parents. The school is to be congratulated for the highly effective way in which it has introduced this new subject.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Generally good examination results;
- Good quality work in food and textiles.

Areas for improvement

- The scheme of work for resistant materials so that it fully meets the requirements of the National Curriculum;
- Resources, especially computers and electronic equipment;

- The rooms used for food and textiles which are shabby and in urgent need of refurbishment.

99. In Years 8 and 9 pupils follow a programme which includes practical work in food technology, textiles and resistant materials. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 who choose to study design and technology can take food technology or textiles at GCSE.
100. In recent years, GCSE results for design and technology overall have matched the national average for all pupils; results have been just below those attained by girls nationally. Performance is different in the individual subjects. In textiles, results in 2001 were above average but they dipped in 2002 to be in line with the national average (for 2001). The drop in results was mainly because the group included some low ability pupils. In 2001, GCSE results in food technology were low but they improved markedly in 2002 to match those of textiles. The results obtained represent good achievement by pupils who enter in Year 8 with fairly low levels of attainment. The majority of pupils achieve results which match their ability. In recent years, pupils have not studied resistant materials or graphic products up to GCSE. Only about half the pupils study design and technology in Years 10 and 11 (a current requirement of the National Curriculum). Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were average, although pupils' range of experience was limited. They have not been making enough use of metal, electronics and computer-aided design. These areas are weak throughout the department: National Curriculum requirements are not met.
101. Inspection evidence is that pupils progress satisfactorily across Years 8 and 9 and by the end of Year 9 attain average standards in food technology and textiles. They achieve well across Years 10 and 11 and attain above average standards by the end of Year 11. In Year 9, pupils work with good accuracy and are learning to check and modify their work as they progress. In a food technology lesson observed, for example, they successfully developed their own ideas for pancakes. In textiles, they designed and made their own bags, incorporating quilting, based on an outline template. Many pupils are able to explain clearly what they were doing and why. In a Year 11 food technology lesson, pupils were making different food products in preparation for their course work. They were able to explain clearly why the ingredients and processes were used, and worked with considerable confidence: standards were above average. Examples of pupils' work seen included some high quality work in food technology and textiles produced by pupils in Years 10 and 11. The quality of examination course work in textiles is particularly good.
102. Standards in resistant materials are below expectations because of the way in which the work is planned and taught. Pupils cannot show their strengths and do not make enough use of design principles. Pupils' drawing skills are satisfactory. However, they do not evaluate their work and plan improvements. They do not use computers to aid design and present their work.
103. Teaching is good, overall, and better in food technology and textiles than in resistant materials. The quality of learning is good in almost all food technology and textiles lessons, and satisfactory in resistant materials. Relationships are good. Teachers in food technology and textiles are considerate of individuals, providing alternative activities to suit their needs, for example, during periods of religious fasting. Work is appropriately planned to provide challenge and interest and match the levels at which pupils are working, including those who have special educational needs or are at an early stage of learning English. Lessons proceed at a good pace. In a very good Year 11 lesson in food technology, pupils worked with confidence to make products of their own choosing. Year 10 pupils drew effectively on earlier learning when they investigated decorative techniques in textiles: they progressed well. In resistant materials the teacher provides clear instructions, for example, about the use of colour in drawings, but the tasks tend to be too easy. Pupils do not have the scope to show their strengths. The principles of design are not emphasised and used with enough regularity. Pupils are not given enough opportunity to evaluate existing products before designing their own.
104. The department has implemented an effective system of assessment. The work which pupils produce is assessed relative to the National Curriculum and the information is used to aid future planning. The schemes of work in food technology and textiles are good. However the scheme of work in resistant materials is unsatisfactory and needs urgent revision. Not enough opportunities

are provided for pupils to evaluate existing products and to work on open-ended design-and-make tasks, as required by the National Curriculum. The range of materials is limited to wood and some plastics. No work is done in the areas of systems and control and electronics. The acting head of department has started the task of managing the department well and has the potential to achieve good results but is held back by weak management of resistant materials. The amount of time allocated to the subject is below average, particularly in Year 8, where it is eroded by time given to information and communication technology, and restricts the time available to cover required areas.

105. Some good improvements have been made since the last inspection. The progress which pupils make is now recorded using National Curriculum levels; pupils are set targets for attainment and are given guidelines on how to improve. The monitoring of the progress which pupils make is much improved and staff have devised effective ways of providing work which is suitable for pupils of different abilities.
106. The rooms in the department are adequate in number. The resistant materials workshop is cramped and the equipment available is limited. Not enough storage is available for materials and pupils' work. The textiles room is a good size but it is shabby and needs refurbishment. The food technology rooms are in poor condition and long overdue for refurbishment. They present a very poor image of the subject and it is impossible to establish and maintain a suitable level of hygiene for a food preparation area. These points were made in the last inspection report but no action has been taken to improve the quality of the rooms.
107. Resources are adequate in food technology and textiles, although the numbers of books and computers are limited, and poor in resistant materials, where there is need for equipment which can be used for computer-aided design and making, and for electronics.

DRAMA

Overall, the quality of provision in drama is **satisfactory** and improving.

Strengths

- Teaching is good and occasionally very good;
- Drama contributes very well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development;
- Good leadership and management of the department;
- Enthusiasm and commitment of all staff.

Areas for improvement

- The proportion of pupils achieving highest grades at GCSE, which is below average;
- The use of information and communication technology within the department;
- Equal access for all classes to the drama studio.

108. GCSE results achieved by pupils in 2001 were well below the national averages for all schools and for girls. However results for 2002 were much improved and in line with national figures (for 2001). Results seem to have reverted to be like those achieved prior to 2001. However, the proportion of pupils achieving the highest grades (A*/A) is below the national average. The trend in results is below that nationally. A careful analysis of examination results has been undertaken over the last year and strategies put into place in order to raise standards. Their impact is evident in 2002 results. Standards of work seen in lessons indicate that pupils in Years 10 and 11 are achieving in line with expectations and some are doing better than this: overall, standards are good.
109. Pupils have little or no experience of drama when they arrive in Year 8. They make good progress by the end of Year 9. They know how to use mime and improvisation, demonstrating good understanding of these conventions when they devise their own work based on a given framework. For example some Year 9 pupils using role-play cards expanded the scenarios and material beyond the basic instructions. They incorporated previously practised ideas of gesture and

freeze-frame into their work. Pupils with special educational needs find they can succeed in drama and make good progress in lessons.

110. The scheme of work has been re-written in order to prepare pupils for the examination syllabus and this ensures that skills and knowledge are developed correctly and progress is good in Years 10 and 11. Short exercises for pupils in Year 9 are developed into longer pieces during Year 11. During a lesson for Year 10 pupils, final group rehearsals took place prior to class performances. Pupils were involved in staging, directing, lighting and acting within the group. One group drew on earlier learning showing very good understanding of theatrical techniques and characterisation, performing a crisp and polished version of *Sleeping Beauty*.
111. Teaching is good overall with examples of very good teaching. Pupils are enthusiastic. Teachers have high expectations, provide good role models and exact commitment from all pupils. They expect pupils to work quickly as independent learners capable of presenting drama professionally. Homework is used to reinforce learning and develop pupils' evaluative skills; they are helped to reflect and consider their own and others' performances. Relationships in lessons are good and effective planning ensures a good balance of activities. Lessons enable pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills although, on occasion, discussion in class can be dominated by one or two pupils. Despite large numbers in some groups, management of pupils is generally good. Their learning is focused and they are keen to do well.
112. Drama is a popular subject and there are regular high quality productions. Pupils are fortunate to experience workshops with professional companies, including ones specifically for gifted and talented pupils. Regular links with the National Theatre and local companies are available for all pupils. Topical and sensitive issues are explored. The diverse cultural backgrounds of pupils are well represented and considered. A very good contribution is made by the department to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
113. Leadership and management of the department are good. Drama was not separately reported at the last inspection. Much has already been achieved since the recent appointment of the head of department. Arrangements to mentor new staff and monitor teaching within the department are clear and appropriate. New systems are being used by pupils and teachers to track progress and involve pupils in their own evaluation of their work. Pupils set themselves goals to achieve each term. Timetabling restrictions mean that not all pupils can have lessons in the drama studio. This means, because they have to use the hall, that they do not have equal access to drama facilities. The department does not have any computers. However, good use is made of video recording of work in lessons and for examination so that pupils can evaluate and improve their own performances.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- Teaching, which is very good;
- Achievement, particularly in Years 10 and 11;
- Attitudes and relationships which are very positive;
- The contribution of fieldwork to pupils' understanding and progress.

Areas for improvement

- Development of more varied writing styles;
- The stating of clear objectives at the beginning of all lessons.

114. The attainment of pupils at the end of Year 9 is in line with that nationally and shows an upward trend over the last few years. This judgement is supported by Year 9 teachers' assessments. Although attainment on entry is variable, it is generally below average. That pupils attain

standards in line with the national average within two years is an indication of good achievement over Years 8 and 9.

115. At the end of Year 11, GCSE results are well above the national averages for all schools and for girls. In 2001 a large entry of pupils gained high grades. These results were in line with pupils' performance in other subjects they took. The percentage of higher grades has risen steadily over the last four years and the improvement is faster than the national trend. In 2002 a much smaller entry succeeded in raising the percentage of A*-C grades still further, although the number of higher grades was smaller and the average performance was not quite as good as that previously. The number of pupils studying geography in Year 11 is back to 2001 proportions. Given the attainment on entry, the average attainment at the end of Year 9 and the fact that not necessarily the highest attainers are recruited into Year 10, the achievement of pupils taking GCSE in geography is very good.
116. From fairly low levels of literacy on entry, pupils improve the quality and range of their written work and learn and use a good technical vocabulary. They read very well. Accuracy and style are helped by well-designed writing frames and pupils learn to take notes that are accurate and useful. In Year 9 pupils produce extended pieces of writing in fieldwork presentations on topics such as tourism in the USA and in work on the Kobe earthquake. Pupils are encouraged to think about their work and reach valid judgements. This process would be helped further if pupils were given more opportunities for imaginative writing. By Years 10 and 11 pupils are able to hypothesise, gather data, analyse it and draw conclusions, as evident in projects which include fieldwork of very high quality on a wide range of investigations including *A coastal study of Margate*, *The regeneration of Hartlepool* and *housing in Wembley*.
117. As with literacy skills, the use of number grows in Years 8 and 9, but is more widely used in Years 10 and 11. Basic geography skills including use of measurement and co-ordinates are put in place in Year 8. These skills are built on and by Year 11 pupils are able to employ number in a variety of ways, seen in fieldwork and coursework. They use formulae for working out velocity. They draw graphs on sediment samples and use the Cailleux roundness index. Pupils are good at presenting data in a variety of graphical forms. They make effective use of information and communication technology to improve their understanding and the presentation of their work. In a lesson on rivers, Year 11 pupils used animated diagrams and computerised testing to improve their knowledge of how river features are formed. Much of the coursework in Years 10 and 11 is produced using information and communication technology to word process the work and generate tables and graphs, and its use can be extended to all aspects of coursework. In Year 9 pupils are able to monitor weather conditions through an information and communication technology link.
118. Pupils' personal development is encouraged by active participation in fieldwork and investigations into issues such as exploitation and conservation in Bangladesh, the cycle of environmental deprivation and issues that require pupils to consider right and wrong and make decisions, such as 'should a carbon tax be added to the price of petrol?'
119. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning to speak English as an additional language, make good progress in lessons with valuable assistance from support teachers and assistants and the provision of suitable learning materials. All pupils are able to reach their full potential and fully participate in all the activities of the department.
120. Teaching is very good, so pupils learn well. Teachers involve pupils from the start through good planning and timing of lessons. Probing questions ensure pupils concentrate and stay on task. Interest and motivation are kept at high levels through a good use of a variety of activities and audio-visual resources. Pupils' knowledge is constantly reinforced by repetition and good plenary sessions. These sessions could have even more value if objectives were stated clearly at the beginning of all lessons. Pupils are able to consolidate and build on skills, not least of which are examination skills. Expectation is high and pupils benefit from the teachers' ability to provide challenging class-work and homework, appropriate to the needs of all pupils. All are expected to contribute to the progress of the lesson. Good humour abounds in lessons, strengthening

relationships and giving pupils confidence in their abilities. Pupils with special educational needs and those at an early stage of learning English, whether supported by learning support assistants or not, are fully included in all lessons, as seen in a Year 8 class in which pupils learning to speak English concentrated hard on map-work problems and made good, methodical progress. Pupils behave very well and have positive attitudes to their studies. They work very well in groups and pairs and are very happy to talk about what they can do. Motivation is high and pupils are able to use their initiative and reasoning powers in problem solving.

121. Since the last inspection improvement has been good. A whole range of areas in teaching and learning, that were deemed good at the last inspection, has been maintained as strengths. In addition, levels of attainment and achievement have improved, and in particular the quality of GCSE results. The department has actively addressed the concern at the last inspection about the lack of information and communication technology, which is now becoming a positive asset within the department. However, there is still an over-dependence on work sheets and pupils should be allowed more opportunity to express themselves in imaginative written tasks. The department is very well managed and the very good and successful team has the will and the expertise to develop the department still further.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- Standards are high: pupils make very good progress;
- Pupils are very well taught by teachers who successfully convey their own enthusiasm and enjoyment;
- Pupils learn very well: they develop good enquiry skills and present their work well.

Areas for improvement

- Further development of information and communication technology as a historical tool.

122. In GCSE examinations in 2001, results were well above the national average for all pupils and above average for girls. In 2002 results dipped a little, but the rising trend of higher grades continued. Standards are above average in lessons and examinations at the end of Years 9 and 11. Progress is generally very good because pupils enjoy history and want to do well.

123. At the end of Year 9, pupils have a secure understanding of chronology. They understand that they must look for links and connections that then lead to a possible cause or reason. When pupils argue from the perspective of a nineteenth century factory owner or a reformer, they begin to appreciate the need to assess bias and reliability. Personal studies on war memorials enabled pupils to research local memorials, and the Commonwealth War Graves Internet sites, and then link these with statistics and facts about the World Wars. Throughout their work, high standards of presentation, well-organised exercises and extended writing are evident. Although pupils of all abilities, including those still learning English and those with special educational needs, are able to achieve their potential, low attaining pupils have some difficulty in understanding textual sources which do not include visual clues.

124. At the end of Year 11, pupils have some depth of knowledge, and higher attaining pupils use this effectively to support an argument or judgement. For example, in a Year 11 lesson, when asked for an explanation of the support given by the United States of America for South Korea, pupils recalled their knowledge of events in Russia, China and the theory of the 'domino effect' to draw up a list of reasons. The habits of careful presentation, corrected answers and notes, and extended writing, help them considerably in their revision. Enquiry skills are well used in their coursework, for which they normally obtain good grades. Lower attaining pupils tend to describe

events with little attempt to select or evaluate. Pupils with special educational needs and those still learning English reach standards appropriate to their abilities.

125. The quality of teaching is very good and stimulates a similar quality of learning. Pupils enjoy history and work hard because teachers successfully share their own knowledge and enthusiasm. The atmosphere in most lessons is very purposeful and much is achieved. Teachers plan lessons very effectively by assessing work carefully to overcome weaknesses identified in, for example, organising and structuring essays. Activities are varied and include video, role play and debates, as well as traditional reading and exercises, so pupils of all abilities learn and contribute. Almost invariably, lessons use materials adapted to the ability levels in the class. Basic skills are taught very effectively. Literacy is particularly well taught, as pupils' use of technical language, the accuracy of their writing and the development of their ideas in writing show. Numeracy and information and communication technology are well taught. Information and communication technology research skills are good but could be extended further to include, for example, the use of databases. High attaining pupils benefit from schemes of work that challenge them. Homework is used most effectively; it is an integral part of the lesson on which further work is based. Independent learning is encouraged through the emphasis on analysis and evidence.
126. The department is very well led. High standards have been maintained since the last inspection. The belief that pupils can reach high standards, and that teachers will help them to do so, is communicated to all. The teachers work very closely together and, for example, show considerable commitment in holding revision classes after school. The curriculum is planned to encourage pupils to reflect on their knowledge and consider the implications for their own community. Values inherent in citizenship are well promoted. Extra-curricular visits are valuable and the department is aware of the need to revise and extend them.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Good opportunities in several subjects boost pupils' capabilities, notably in modern foreign languages, English, mathematics, geography and history;
- Provision of computers in specialist rooms is good;
- The network manager is highly competent.

Areas for improvement

- The standards pupils achieve by the end of Years 9 and 11, which are below expectations;
- The management of the subject, to co-ordinate more effectively students' experiences and progress;
- The curriculum, so that statutory requirements are met;
- The way in which the commercial teaching scheme is used, to increase interest and challenge for Year 8 pupils;
- The scheme of work for pupils now in Years 8 and 9, so that all receive their full curricular entitlement.

127. Pupils have information and communication technology lessons in Years 8 and 9. Those who take business studies at GCSE continue to make systematic use of computers (mostly for word-processing) in Years 10 and 11. Pupils in all years make use of information and communication technology in several subjects.
128. In 2002, the teacher assessments for pupils at the end of Year 9 in information and communication technology were in line with those nationally, for recent years. However, inspection evidence is that the assessment was not securely based on the National Curriculum and pupils' capabilities are below expectations. Overall, the attainment of students at the end of Year 11 is also below that expected nationally. The school does not make any planned provision for information and communication technology in Years 10 and 11 and no systematic

arrangements for assessment relative to National Curriculum requirements are in place. Pupils taking GCSE business studies and those using computers in several subjects (notably modern foreign languages, English, mathematics, geography and history) consolidate and extend their learning in a limited range of applications.

129. The school takes pupils from a large number of feeder schools. Many, at the start of Year 8, have considerable ability in the use of information and communication technology, as shown by their work in other subjects, but not enough account is taken of their earlier learning in information and communication technology lessons. Year 8 pupils are following a published scheme which requires them to work through an interactive computer program to complete a set of exercises. All are following this at foundation level, even though the software has the provision to operate at different levels. The work is too easy for many and they are underachieving. In work seen, pupils could work through questionnaires displayed on computer screens. They could interpret information and make choices. The focus was on word-processing and several of the finer points, such as the use of headers and footers and page numbering, were covered. However, the tasks set to develop these skills were often lacking in stimulus and did not inspire pupils' interest. The scheme is used differently in Year 9: pupils make effective use of suitable textbooks and have more scope to work at their own level. Pupils' attainment is closer to, but still below, the national expectation. In lessons observed, all pupils could combine information from several sources, most could organise and present it effectively, a few could refine and improve it.
130. Teaching in the lessons observed was satisfactory, but weaknesses are evident, which affect pupils' progress. The work pupils produce is checked for accuracy and recorded as having been done but there is little day-to-day marking of work and no diagnostic marking to help pupils to improve. Pupils in Years 8 and 9 are being guided through a published scheme, with little intervention. They are well motivated and generally enjoy learning. The approach inherent in the software used enables them to build systematically on their learning. Relationships are good. Pupils work co-operatively in pairs and assist each other. They seek help when necessary and occasional weaknesses in the computer system are dealt with effectively by the very capable network manager. The general climate for learning in information and communication technology lessons is satisfactory. Pupils' experience of computers is broadened when they visit Legoland and when the Women into Engineering bus visits the school, but their understanding of computer control gained through these experiences is not assessed. Whilst continued use of the published scheme would ensure all areas of the National Curriculum are covered, there is urgent need for the scheme of work for pupils now in Years 8 and 9 to be reviewed to ensure they all have access to the full National Curriculum.
131. A fundamental weakness is the way in which the published scheme is used in Year 8. The scheme has the capacity to cover all aspects of the National Curriculum but its restricted use in Year 8 (drawing on materials at foundation level only) limits the learning of middle and higher ability pupils. It is better suited to those experiencing difficulties, either because of special educational needs or because they are just starting to speak English. The scheme has replaced a programme which did not cover all aspects of the subject. Particular omissions have been the use of databases, computer control and the effects of the use of information and communication technology in society. Considerable scope remains for collaboration with other departments to strengthen pupils' learning in these areas.
132. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 practise and acquire skills in information and communication technology through its use in other subjects. Some very good work was seen in all years in modern foreign languages and good work in English, mathematics, geography and history with further examples in food technology and textiles. In modern foreign languages, for example, pupils in Years 9 and 10 have made imaginative use of multi-media software to produce presentations on a variety of topics. Pupils successfully exploited the capabilities of the software and achieved high standards. Good work was also seen when pupils used an Internet site, written entirely in Spanish, to research details of train journeys in Spain, in preparation for a forthcoming visit. In English, pupils in Year 8 have produced the outline of the Romeo and Juliet story in the form of a newspaper using word processing software to manipulate text and graphics. Some work of high quality came from this imaginative application. In other subjects, including

food technology, textiles and business studies, pupils make good use of information and communication technology in their coursework folders. The library has good computer provision. This is a recent investment which allows pupils to have access to the Internet for research purposes but which still requires the provision of multi-media software in order to extend the sources of information available. Although other examples of good work were seen, much involves the use of word processing and desk-top publishing software; the use of other applications is limited. Very little use is made of databases or computer control and data logging, and few opportunities are taken to discuss the impact of information and communication technology in society. Standards at the end of Year 11 are below average overall because most pupils have access to restricted areas of the National Curriculum: they do not make the progress expected.

133. Specialist rooms have modern computers because of recent investment made by the school but only one room is of sufficient size to accommodate 30 computers and thus allow pupils to have one machine each. Two other rooms each contain about 15 computers which means that many pupils have to share a machine. The rooms are cramped and in places there is not enough space for two pupils to sit side-by-side, which often leads to unproductive use of pupils' time. In the absence of more computers, the department should consider devising appropriate activities which could be done away from the computers. The school has some equipment which has been used in the past for teaching computer control. Staff appeared to be uncertain as to whether this could be used with the computers now in place. No provision is made in any of the specialist rooms for projectors which can show the output from a computer on a large screen. None of the rooms has adjustable chairs, causing pupils to adopt unsuitable postures when using keyboards.
134. The head of department was absent at the time of the inspection, due to long term sickness. Improvements initiated before her absence and carried through by the school are bringing benefits: the number and quality of computers have improved. The network manager is highly competent and has established a reliable network system as well as providing considerable advice and support to teaching staff. However, lack of leadership within the subject and co-ordination with other subjects are impeding pupils' achievements. The development of information and communication technology was a key issue for action at the last inspection, and remains so now. The benefit to the school of government-supported staff training has been limited, in part because staff training needs have not been adequately identified and also because of lack of equipment in some areas. For example, in music pupils cannot create, manipulate and refine sounds using information and communication technology and in science the use of appropriate technology to observe and take measurements is possible only as a teacher-demonstration. As a result, staff in these subjects are unable to meet fully the National Curriculum requirements. While investment in computers has been substantial in recent years, and the number of computers available is in line with the average nationally for a school of this size, some computers are old and in need of replacement and the network does not serve the whole site.

BUSINESS STUDIES

Business studies, provided as a GCSE course in Years 10 and 11, is co-ordinated within the information and communication technology department by the head of that department. Because of her absence, lessons were taken by a temporary teacher during the inspection.

Overall, the quality of provision in business studies is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Pupils achieve very well at GCSE;
- The scheme of work is very good.

Areas for improvement

- Make more textbooks available for pupils to use at home;
- Reduce the use of photocopied worksheets;
- Provide more computers which are modern and connected to the school network.

135. GCSE results were well above the national averages in 2001, both for all schools and for girls, and much better than in the previous year. Results in 2002, while still very good, were not quite as good as in 2001. The likely reason is the poor completion of coursework by a number of lower-attaining pupils.
136. Work seen during the inspection was of satisfactory standard in Year 10 and a little better than this in Year 11: pupils have progressed well. In Year 10, pupils have a sound grasp of the difference between goods and service industries. Year 11 pupils, working on a topic about human resource management, made good progress in learning about different forms of training and appreciated its relevance in business growth. The teaching and learning observed were satisfactory, with some good features. Pupils are encouraged to contribute to their own learning, and they respond well, for example, by asking pertinent questions, such as why some businesses grow all the time, and others do not. Although pupils worked hard in lessons observed, it was clear that some did not appreciate the finer points and the teacher helpfully modified approaches. Pupils convey their understanding effectively in written answers.
137. The subject has been well organised, with a very good scheme of work, although at the inspection interim arrangements were in place. The subject was not separately reported at the last inspection, although GCSE results then, as now, were good. Textbooks are only available for use in lessons and in consequence extensive use is made of photocopied worksheets. The quality of copies is often poor and they are unattractive to use. Because of a shortage of textbooks, pupils are unable to take them home for further study, to do reading in preparation for forthcoming work or for revision for tests and examinations. More textbooks are needed. The business studies room is adequate. The computers in the room are over five years old, are not connected to the school network and do not have access to the Internet. These need to be upgraded urgently in order to provide appropriate information and communication technology facilities for the subject.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

Strengths

- GCSE results are very good;
- Teaching is good, with very good features;
- Pupils have very positive attitudes towards learning a foreign language;
- Management of the subject and teamwork are good.

Areas for improvement

- Greater use of spoken language in spontaneous situations, without prompts;
- Extension of the range of written work in Years 8 and 9;
- Structured development of extended reading skills at Key Stage 3.

138. All pupils learn French in Year 8 (building on learning in middle schools) and all pupils choose either Spanish or German as a second foreign language. In Years 10 and 11 most pupils study one modern foreign language to GCSE and a small number of pupils choose to learn two.
139. By the end of Year 9 teacher assessments in modern foreign languages are well above the national average. By the end of Year 11 pupils achieve GCSE results in French that are well above the national average and above average for girls and in 2002 they were a little better than in 2001. GCSE results in German are very high relative to all schools nationally and to girls' results. In 2002, results were not quite as high as in 2001, but many more pupils took the examination. In Spanish, GCSE results are usually above the national averages for all schools and for girls although in 2002 they were only a little above the average (for 2001). Generally pupils tend to do significantly better in modern foreign languages than in their other subjects.

140. In work observed at the start of Year 9 standards were in line with national expectations. Pupils who have only studied Spanish or German since the beginning of Year 8 are making good progress. Pupils can identify key information in familiar contexts in short written and spoken texts and they have acquired a useful range of vocabulary which they are able to use in guided role-play dialogues and short exchanges. They make intelligent guesses at unknown words relating them to familiar words, such as in a Year 9 German class relating *täglich* to *tag* (daily, day). Higher attaining pupils in German are also beginning to combine vocabulary from different topic areas. By Year 9 they are beginning to write longer sentences using tenses other than the present, such as in accounts in French about how they will spend the week-end. However, the range of written work is rather narrow. Lower attaining pupils and some with special educational needs make good progress with the help of teacher-prepared support materials, such as texts with gaps to fill and model sentences. Many learners with special educational needs are achieving well: they understand the need to copy correctly, observing accents and pay attention to detail, making adjectives agree with nouns. Pupils learning to speak English make good progress in learning another modern European language and often do well in speaking and listening activities. A general weakness is that pupils are less confident using the spoken language in spontaneous situations and do not have enough opportunities to practise using language regularly in such situations without relying on written prompts.

141. By Year 11, standards in lessons are above average; pupils progress well. They are more aware of language patterns. The highest attaining pupils can write fairly accurate long sentences using connecting words and a range of tenses. Examples include, in French, an account of a work experience placement in an office in the past tense, in Spanish a description of the life of Eva Peron, and in German an account of school life using a wide range of descriptive vocabulary and correct case endings. Pupils are learning appropriate strategies for

identifying key information from written and spoken texts when some of the material is unfamiliar. Pupils with special educational needs make generally good progress when helped by a support assistant. Occasionally, more time is needed to co-ordinate the work of class teacher and support assistant for the support to be fully effective.

142. Teaching and learning are good, often very good. Lessons across the languages follow a common structure and are methodically planned so learners know what they are required to do. At the end of each lesson there is recapitulation and consolidation of learning. Teachers are keen to explore new initiatives and show enthusiasm for their subject which is transmitted to learners. In the classroom pupils are encouraged to show curiosity about other countries and cultures. Teachers use the wide range of languages which their pupils speak to advantage. For example, in a Spanish class in Year 8, discussion focused on similarities between new vocabulary with reference to words in Spanish and Berber, Portuguese and Arabic. Teachers have good subject knowledge and generally use the appropriate language for all aspects of the lesson. Two teachers are native speakers of the languages they teach. Teachers' accents overall are good, which pupils imitate successfully. Occasionally in a lower ability class in French there was some unnecessary use of English. Teachers equip learners with very good strategies for coping with examinations and give generously of their time in lunch time catch-up clubs and Year 11 revision classes after school which help pupils to improve their grades. Teachers share excellent relationships with their pupils who in turn have very positive attitudes to language learning and quickly organise themselves in groups and pairs in a spirit of co-operation and determination. Learners in Year 8 join in choral activities enthusiastically and a Year 8 Spanish class gleefully practised tongue twisters in Spanish trying hard to make their accents sound Spanish. (Pupils benefit from a good programme of foreign visits.) Homework is well used to extend class-work.

143. Since the last inspection there have been very significant improvements. Assessment is now more informative and consistent throughout the department and is linked to National Curriculum levels. Pupils are made aware of what they need to achieve to attain a particular National Curriculum level and Year 8 pupils in French are able to say why a text should merit a certain level. When asked, pupils in all years know what they should do to improve their work.

Information and communication technology now plays a larger role in the work of the department and there were interesting examples of pupils in a Year 9 French class using a spreadsheet to display graphically the results of a class survey of favourite activities which they were then able to discuss in writing. Pupils in Year 10 in French, German and Spanish were able to give presentations of holiday destinations, or about a famous person, which they had prepared using commercial software. In Years 8 and 9, while the time allocated for learning both languages is generous, the time available for each foreign language is limited, and this restricts the range of activities which can be done in class. Opportunities for pupils to work creatively are limited. Lessons are now more evenly spaced on the timetable. This year the department has attempted to address some of the difficulties arising from receiving pupils in Year 8 from a large number of schools, all with a different experience of learning French. Pupils have been grouped into classes according to ability at an earlier stage. The department has improved resources for extended reading in all three languages and pupils are now encouraged to read for pleasure but, as the department acknowledges, extended reading skills require more structured development.

144. The department benefits from the clear leadership of the head of faculty who has fostered a strong team approach and within a short time of taking up post has established consistent procedures across the three languages. New schemes of work which are being established are systematic and indicate how different needs will be met. Staff feel well supported. Resources are generally adequate except that the range of textbooks in French for Years 8 and 9 is too narrow to meet the needs of all pupils. Similarly, while effort has been made to increase the number of Spanish books in the library, the range is limited.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- Teaching is good; and lessons are well planned;
- Music makes a good contribution to pupils' moral, social and cultural development;
- The newly established range and variety of extra-curricular activities are good.

Areas for improvement

- Standards reached by pupils at the end of Years 9 and 11;
- Pupils' skills in composition and notation;
- The continued development and monitoring of the assessment procedures;
- Access to appropriate and sufficient information and communication equipment for all pupils;
- Accommodation for group and ensemble work.

145. Teachers' assessment reported for 2002 indicate Year 9 pupils reached standards well above the national average but work seen in lessons and from other evidence during the inspection does not confirm this judgement: standards are below expectations. GCSE results in 2001 were well below the national average for girls, although five pupils achieved high grades. Results in 2002, although improved, are still likely to be below the national average. Pupils did not achieve as well in music as in their other subjects, which is in marked contrast to their relatively good performance in music up to 2000.
146. Standards seen in lessons for all years indicate attainment below that expected. In Years 10 and 11 pupils' standards of performance are better than their composition and notation work. They evaluate their work but their answers show lack of understanding and use of musical language. Pupils are unable to read musical notation correctly and the melody writing lacks an understanding of melodic shape. Some pupils attempt to make their melodies more interesting using quavers, dotted notes and accidentals. However, those written by lower attaining pupils are very basic and contain fundamental mistakes. Pupils with special educational needs or those at an early stage of learning English generally keep up well. Standards seen in lessons for Years 8 and 9 pupils show that pupils have limited awareness of timbre and texture in ensemble work. They are unable to use correct finger technique when playing keyboards and their rhythmic skills fall short of expectations.
147. Teaching seen during the inspection was good and this was reflected in pupils' learning and progress. Lessons are well planned with good awareness of the needs of individual pupils so that all pupils receive appropriate tasks and progress well in lessons. Teaching is designed to meet the needs of the examination criteria and to address the gaps in pupils' skills and knowledge. Class management is good. Learning is reviewed before and during lessons and appropriate time is allowed for practical work. Pupils, despite having to work in only one room for practical activities remain committed to their task and show determination to achieve in an atmosphere which at times can be very noisy. Understanding of musical language is developed through the use of key words and oral evaluation, although on occasion opportunities are missed to develop numeracy skills. Lack of suitable information and communication equipment means that curricular requirements for pupils in Years 8 and 9 are not fully met.
148. The school provides funding for a range of instrumental lessons. About one hundred pupils receive lessons; many on traditional instruments that enable them to explore the music of their own cultures. New extra-curricular activities have recently been introduced, and the department provides open access for pupils to practise at lunch times. Relationships and behaviour are good; pupils enjoy the musical opportunities offered. The contribution music makes to pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good.
149. At the last inspection GCSE results were above average but they are lower, now. Since the appointment this term of the new and capable head of department much has already been

achieved. A new handbook has been written identifying clear strategies in order to prioritise and raise standards. New schemes of work have been devised and these ensure that musical skills and knowledge are practised regularly. The new procedures for assessment are good. However, there is a need to monitor and develop them further. At present not all pupils are aware what they need to do in order to improve their work. New resources have been purchased, but more computers are needed.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Teaching is good and pupils are making good progress;
- The range of extra-curricular activities is good.

Areas for improvement

- GCSE results;
- Indoor facilities including changing rooms;
- Provision of GCSE in dance.

150. Recent GCSE results have been disappointing, being well below the averages (for 2001) for all schools nationally and for girls. Inspection evidence indicates that the standard of work by pupils who are currently studying for the examination is much improved and above average. Standards at the end of Year 9 are broadly average.
151. Pupils arrive at the school from their middle school bringing with them a range of physical education skills, many of which are below the levels expected. They quickly settle into the school and make good progress, and by the end of Year 9 most pupils are reaching levels of attainment that are in line with attainment nationally. In gymnastics, pupils learn to devise sequences of controlled movement using small apparatus and they develop confidence and co-operative skills, as well as their technical ability. Pupils make good progress in developing their stick-handling skills in hockey, improve their ability to pass and receive the ball, they dribble with control and shoot with good accuracy. They demonstrate satisfactory ball-handling skills in netball and basketball and understand simple attack and defence strategies. Their knowledge and understanding of health-related exercise is satisfactory and they understand the principles of warming-up. Their co-operation in both the planning and evaluation of their work is good
152. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are also making good progress, and by the end of Year 11 most pupils, particularly those in the GCSE groups, are attaining standards that are at least in line with national expectations, and many do even better. In health-related exercise lessons pupils understand the effects of exercise on the body and how to prepare themselves properly for activities. Many pupils confidently lead their class in effective warm-up routines. They are developing good skills in a range of activities and are able to apply the skills they have practised in full game situations. They are able to undertake a range of roles including performing, officiating and coaching. Pupils in the GCSE groups are developing understanding and competence in both the theoretical and practical aspects of the course. Inspection evidence indicates that levels of attainment of the pupils currently studying for the examination in both the practical and theoretical aspects are above average. Many teams take part in inter-school sporting competitions, and gain much success. Two pupils have represented Harrow in netball and a further two have gone on to represent Middlesex in athletics. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated and given much sensitive and effective support by both teachers and fellow pupils and reach levels of attainment that are commendable for them.
153. The quality of teaching is good and pupils respond by learning well. Teaching is never less than satisfactory, and in the majority of lessons observed is good or very good. Teachers' secure knowledge of the subject is conveyed through effective demonstration and good question-and-

answer sessions. Thorough planning, incorporating varied teaching strategies with a carefully planned sequence of activities, including individual and collaborative learning, is a feature of most lessons. Pupils are expected to behave well and work hard and in most lessons these expectations are met. Teachers inject fun and enjoyment into their lessons and pupils respond very positively. Their enjoyment of the subject is very evident. The curriculum allows pupils to take part in a wide range of activities, and is meeting the statutory requirements. Schemes of work are in the process of being updated but already are supporting what is being taught. Dance is not provided as a GCSE subject. Many staff, including non-specialists, give very freely of their time to provide a wide range of extra-curricular activities, which are very well supported by large groups of enthusiastic pupils. Pupils have the opportunity to visit national sporting events.

154. Due to the shortage of suitable indoor accommodation there is an over-emphasis on the provision of games activities to the detriment of dance and gymnastics. Facilities for physical education, a gymnasium, play ground and well-maintained playing field, are very appropriate, when the weather allows the use of the outdoor facilities. However, the playing fields become water-logged in wet weather. At times during the week the changing rooms are too small for the large number of girls who are time-tabled for physical education at the same time. The school is in need of the sports hall it is anxious to obtain. High quality commercial posters and photographs of pupils' sporting activities and school teams effectively stimulate interest in the subject.
155. The recently appointed head of department has made a very impressive start to re-organising the work of the department. She is in the process of reviewing and updating the departmental documentation. New schemes of work are already helping raise attainment. A new assessment system has been introduced which is meeting statutory requirements. Pupils are now aware of the level of attainment they have reached, and what they need to do to improve. Fuller use should be made of this information to influence curricular planning. Talented teachers work well together, support each other and show a strong commitment to their pupils, and to the improvement of the department.
156. Standards at the last inspection were good. Inspection evidence is that during the last year good progress has been made to re-establish those standards. New schemes of work and a new assessment system are helping to raise the standard of attainment. The status of the department within the school is much improved.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory** because the minimum statutory curriculum is not in place.

Strengths

- GCSE results are good;
- Attitudes are positive and pupils behave well;
- Pupils taught religious education make good progress.

Areas for improvement

- Pupils do not receive their curricular entitlement in Years 10 and 11, which means a legal requirement is not met;
- Assessment is not used as a tool for learning;
- In some lessons the teaching lacks specialist knowledge and understanding.

157. GCSE results in 2001 were above the averages for all schools nationally and a little better than for girls nationally. Results in 2002 were not quite as good but still likely to be above average. Pupils do better in religious studies than in their other subjects. However, the proportion of pupils who took GCSE in religious studies was much lower than nationally. Attainment at the end of Year 9 is in line with national expectations.

158. The standard of attainment of pupils at the start of Year 8 is below expectation but by the end of Year 9 they have reached that expected. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress: pupils are keen and want to learn. They know about Christianity and the other major religions of the world. They understand the significance of religious belief and practice. They use correct and appropriate religious vocabulary. They present their information well both orally and in writing. Pupils do not, however, know enough about the similarities and differences across and within religions. They lack the skills by which to compare and contrast. Nor do their knowledge and understanding show that they have learnt about themselves from their study of religion and human experience. In their attitudes, behaviour and personal relationships, however, pupils show a high degree of maturity.
159. Observation of lessons with pupils in the GCSE option groups and analysis of their work show that while they start in Year 10 at the standard expected, by Year 11 they are above expectation. This is good progress. Pupils achieve well because they want to learn and want to succeed in the examination. They know the beliefs and practices of Christianity and Islam. They understand the similarities and differences between the two religions and also about differences within Christianity. They apply Christian and Muslim ideas to aspects of life and compare them with their own point of view. Written work is presented well but is sometimes not extensive enough, evaluation especially. At least two out of three pupils are in line to achieve higher grades in the GCSE examination. Pupils continue to show a high level of personal maturity in their attitudes, behaviour and personal relationships. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 who do not opt for a GCSE full course do not follow a GCSE course at all. Their attainment is far below the minimum expected.
160. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, with some good features. In all lessons the teacher manages and motivates pupils well. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of religion are satisfactory in Years 8 and 9. In the Year 10 and Year 11 option groups, however, pupils miss the clarity and precision that comes from specialist knowledge and understanding. On the other hand, all pupils benefit from the good use of investigative techniques. Pupils prepare and give presentations on topics such as the life and work of the Ten Gurus in Sikhism in Year 9 and the treatment of animals according to Christianity and Islam in the GCSE group in Year 11. Such presentations are good. They develop pupils' skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening. They also require considerable intellectual effort from pupils. In their lessons pupils work productively and at a brisk pace but have no accurate knowledge of their progress. Procedures for assessing pupils' ongoing work are good but not enough use is made of the information gained. Pupils do not know how their attainment is described in the syllabus. End of unit assessments are not used to show pupils what level they are at and how they can improve. Pupils do not have any way of measuring their progress or of setting themselves new targets in terms of the syllabus. Assessment as a tool for pupils' learning is in need of development.
161. The school claims in its self-audit that it provides teaching of religious education for all pupils in accordance with the Agreed Syllabus. This is not so. The curriculum does not meet the requirements of the agreed syllabus in Years 10 and 11. The statutory curriculum is not in place and pupils do not receive their educational entitlement in these years. The school provides the full GCSE course as an option in Years 10 and 11 but the Agreed Syllabus requires the school to provide an hour a week and to teach all pupils the GCSE (full or short course). The units provided as part of the personal, social, community and health education programme are valuable but they do not meet the school's legal obligation to provide religious education in accordance with the Agreed Syllabus. The school improvement plan, however, includes a commitment to introduce the GCSE (short course) in 2004. The amount of time allocated to pupils in Years 8 and 9 is half that given to the other humanities subjects. The programmes of study are broad and relevant but lack balance. They emphasise what pupils are to learn about religions but say little about what pupils may learn about themselves from the study of religion and human experience. The programmes of study include regular opportunities for assessment but assessment is not used systematically to enhance pupils' progress and to guide curricular planning. Provision for pupils' personal development through religious education is unsatisfactory.
162. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school has not appointed a permanent head of department and religious education is in a transitional phase. The acting head of department has

given continuity and brought improvements despite the insecurity of a temporary contract. The departmental development plan is a detailed and practical programme that sets priorities for the future of religious education but does not include a strategy for minimum statutory compliance. Whether the school's commitment in its improvement plan to the introduction of the GCSE (short course) represents a change in the value accorded to religious education is unclear. Arrangements to monitor and evaluate teaching are in place but some aspects of monitoring and evaluation depend on specialist input not available within the school. The match between teaching and the demands of the curriculum are satisfactory in Years 8 and 9 but unsatisfactory for the GCSE groups in Years 10 and 11. Successful transition to specialism in religious education is possible but requires more learning plus appropriate staff development and attendance at courses, including those provided by the GCSE awarding body. Resources for learning are generally adequate but artefacts and videos are in short supply. The GCSE (short course) planned for 2004 will require a considerable increase in the number of textbooks.

163. Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour continue to show a high level of personal maturity. The management of pupils remains good. The pace and productivity of lessons and teacher's expectations of pupils have improved but command of subject material has diminished and the use of learning objectives in the planning of lessons is not as good. Procedures for measuring pupils' performance have improved but assessment still needs to be used more effectively in the process of learning. The most significant lack of improvement is that pupils in Years 10 and 11 still do not receive their minimum statutory entitlement.