

INSPECTION REPORT

**CHAFFORD HUNDRED CAMPUS
SECONDARY SCHOOL**

Chafford Hundred

LEA area: Thurrock

Unique reference number: 132083

Headteacher: Mrs A Banks

Reporting inspector: Dr A R Beaver
20224

Dates of inspection: 6th – 7th May 2003

Inspection number: 249271

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 to 16 years (designated)
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Chafford Hundred Campus Mayflower Road Chafford Hundred Essex
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr T Gilbey
Date of previous inspection:	No previous inspection

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20224	Dr A R Beaver	Registered inspector	History	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9724	Mrs B Quest-Ritson	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
12762	Mr R Catchpole	Team inspector	Science	
22042	Mr J Challands	Team inspector	Geography	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
8552	Mr W Hart	Team inspector	Design and technology	
30699	Mr A Kemp	Team inspector	Mathematics Numeracy	
4757	Mr D Morris	Team inspector	Music	
16950	Dr C Orr	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages English as an additional language	
15678	Mrs J Radford	Team inspector	Religious education Special educational needs	
8672	Mr M Roberts	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Citizenship	
3731	Mr W Robson	Team inspector	English Literacy	
10053	Ms J Simms	Team inspector	Art and design Educational inclusion, including race equality	
12972	Mr A Weaden	Team inspector	Physical education	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Chafford Hundred Community Campus Secondary School is near to Grays in Thurrock and pupils come mainly from Chafford Hundred or parts of South Stifford. Some pupils transfer at age eleven from the primary school on the shared campus, but others are from other primary schools locally. The school works closely with its partner primary school, located in the same building, and when statutory requirements can be met, the intention is to merge the primary and secondary schools. The school shares use of the many new facilities on the campus with the local community, including a library, and aims to become a centre of learning for the locality. The school has community status and is comprehensive. It was opened in September 2001 when the first pupils entered Year 7. It now provides education for a total of 260 pupils in Years 7 and 8. A further year group will join the school in September 2003 and two more in the following two years so that the secondary school will provide for Years 7 to 11 by September 2005. There are more boys than girls in both Years 7 and 8. About one pupil in five has an ethnic minority background, some from the Indian sub-continent, but others from Europe and Africa. An above average percentage use English as an additional language; their first languages are Gujarati, Panjabi, Bengali and Urdu, but very few are at an early stage in learning English. The percentage of pupils who claim entitlement to free school meals is below average. An average percentage of pupils have special educational needs, because of learning, behavioural or physical difficulties. A few have statements of special educational needs. When pupils enter the school, their attainment spans the full range, but is average overall. The campus is the result of a partnership between the local education authority and the private sector. The new building has many original features. The school employs proportionately many more learning support tutors than most schools. Every pupil and teacher has use of an individual computer and access to an Intranet on a wireless network. The school has encountered difficulties in recruiting and retaining specialist teachers.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Chafford Hundred Campus Secondary is a new school based in an impressive new building. It has established itself as a popular choice of pupils and parents. Standards are above those seen nationally for pupils in Years 7 and 8. Teaching is good. The leadership is very good and has clear vision for the school's further development. At this very early stage in its development, the school is giving satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards are above those usually found nationally for pupils in Years 7 and 8 whose competence in information and communication technology (ICT) is well above national expectations.
- The teaching is good and helps pupils to learn successfully.
- Pupils' personal development is very well provided for and enables them to take much responsibility for their own learning.
- The leadership of the headteacher is very good and shows exceptionally clear vision for the further development of the school.
- The accommodation and learning resources available to every pupil are of very good quality.

What could be improved

- The admission of pupils to the school is in excess of the numbers of places planned for in the accommodation currently available.
- The needs of the most talented individual pupils are not yet formally identified nor met well enough in most subjects.
- The behaviour of a small minority of pupils, mainly boys, sometimes prevents them and others from achieving as well as they could.
- The sports field used for the teaching and learning of physical education is unsatisfactory.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school opened in September 2001 and has not previously been inspected.

STANDARDS

As the school opened in September 2001 with Year 7 pupils only, national comparisons cannot be made with standards in the Year 9 National Curriculum tests, nor in GCSE examinations. However, the school entered the pupils currently in Year 8 for voluntary Year 7 National Curriculum tests in 2002. Their performance compared well with the standards that they had attained in the Year 6 National Curriculum tests in 2001, prior to their entry to the school, and showed good achievement over Year 7 with good added value.

The school determines targets to be reached in the National Curriculum tests and in GCSE examinations from the thorough testing that it undertakes. Targets are challenging but realistic.

In the work seen during the inspection, pupils' standards of literacy and numeracy were good. In work seen in English, pupils read fluently and their writing was accurate. In mathematics, they worked well when independently handling data. In science, they researched the lives of famous scientists well. The standards seen in pupils' use of ICT were well above those expected nationally for their age group. The school's difficulties in recruiting specialist teachers have held back pupils' skills of speaking in modern foreign languages in recent months.

There is little apparent difference in the achievement of girls and boys in the work seen. Pupils from all ethnic backgrounds and those who use English as an additional language achieve as well as others and the few at an early stage of learning English achieve very well. The school has not formally identified the needs of talented individuals and, consequently, their needs have not been met in most subjects. Pupils who are on the school's register of special educational needs achieve well and benefit considerably from the work of learning support tutors.

Overall, pupils achieve well and make good progress.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils have positive attitudes to the school and to learning. Most work well and can do things for themselves.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave well in class and equally well when not directly supervised around the school. The arrogant behaviour of a small minority, mainly boys, is unhelpful to their learning.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Relationships are very good among pupils and with teachers. Most pupils are mature and confident.
Attendance	Good. Almost all pupils attend regularly.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Years 7 and 8
Quality of teaching	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.

The teaching is good in both Year 7 and Year 8. It meets the needs of pupils of differing competence, ethnic background and those with English as an additional language well. The few pupils at an early stage in learning English make very good progress from the teaching and in-class support that they receive. Those with differing special educational needs are well taught and supported to learn successfully. However, the attitudes and behaviour of a small minority of boys prevent them from

learning as successfully as they could. Literacy, numeracy, mathematics and science are all well taught. The teaching and learning in most English lessons are satisfactory, but the good teaching of literacy in other subjects enables pupils to achieve well in English. The teaching and learning of ICT is very good. Although permanent appointments have now been made for the teaching of modern foreign languages, these teachers have not yet taken up their posts and teaching is not currently enabling pupils to make the progress that they should. Overall, teachers plan lessons well and provide a good challenge to help pupils to learn. They use a good range of methods and manage pupils well in almost all lessons. The needs of the most talented pupils are not formally identified in most subjects and teaching is not, therefore, yet certain to meet the needs of all individuals. Overall, pupils learn well. They concentrate in lessons and often work independently and in small groups very well in most subjects – for example, when using computers.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The innovative curriculum provides pupils with a good range of knowledge, skills and competences intended to develop their skills and understanding of how to manage their own learning throughout life. Citizenship is especially well provided for. Extra-curricular opportunities are very good and much appreciated by pupils and parents.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The appointment of a co-ordinator for special educational needs this year has improved the management of provision. Pupils' progress in meeting the targets of their individual education plans is regularly reviewed. The work of the learning support tutors is very effective in helping pupils to make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Pupils' needs are identified well. They receive good support and follow the mainstream curriculum successfully. The very few pupils at an early stage in learning English make rapid progress from the support that they receive.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. The curricular competences of relating to people, managing situations and citizenship support pupils' personal development very well. Provision for their moral, social and cultural development is very good. Their spiritual development is well provided for, although there is little opportunity for reflection – for example, in assemblies.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well. Pupils have very good opportunities to consult with their personal tutors who support their personal development very well. They receive much encouragement, praise and reward for achieving their best.
Partnership with parents	Satisfactory. The school works hard to strengthen the partnership with parents, but it is not yet wholly effective in realising its intentions.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher has provided continuity by planning the new school and ensuring its development to the present. There is very good teamwork and exceptionally clear vision for the school's further development. Difficulties in recruiting and retaining teachers have been significant challenges for management but, overall, sufficient qualified staff have been found.

Aspect	Comment
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very well. Governors are enthusiastic and aim to inform themselves well about standards achieved and the quality of educational provision. They are very supportive of the headteacher and staff, and take up opportunities for training to enhance their skills to enable them to question management constructively.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. Senior staff have used performance management imaginatively in a school with very few teachers in its first year. Close checking on the quality of teaching has led to the dismissal of some temporary teachers. Data provided from the testing that the school uses are informative and helpful to target setting. The means to evaluate success in meeting targets in school development planning are clear.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Provision of teachers is satisfactory but considerable difficulties in recruitment and retention of teachers have been encountered and management has used imaginative means to meet the needs of teaching the curriculum. Appointments have already been made to supply pupils' needs in modern foreign languages. Provision of learning support tutors is exceptional and these staff support pupils' learning very well. The accommodation is very good, but more pupils are being admitted each year than the accommodation will be able to provide for, when all five year groups are in the school. The condition of the sports field is unsatisfactory. Learning resources are very good. Funding for setting up the school has been generous and used very well. Best value principles are applied very well. Pupils' standards seen compare well with those expected for their age groups. The school challenges itself greatly through its innovative curriculum and very good range of extra-curricular opportunities. Parents are regularly consulted through questionnaires, and pupils through a school council. Competition for tendering and selection and management of services in setting up this new school are very competently handled and an audit has already taken place with satisfactory outcomes.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school has high expectations that their children will work hard and achieve their best. Their children like the school. Extra-curricular activities are very good. They feel comfortable to approach the school with problems about their children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many think that they are not well enough informed about how their children are getting on. Some are concerned that the school does not work closely enough with them. Homework. Behaviour.

Inspectors agree with parents' positive views. Parents receive one written report a year and are invited to two meetings with their children's tutors in Year 7. The system does not enable them to talk with subject teachers and some, justifiably, want to do so. Arrangements to meet subject teachers can be made, but parents do not often make additional appointments. Parents are invited to attend the morning review meetings that pupils have with tutors, but few do so. Overall, the school provides parents with much information, but this does not yet ensure that communication is as effective as it should be to allay all parents' concerns. Homework was set regularly during the inspection and was suitably challenging. The marking of work was sometimes not of a consistently good quality – for example, in English and mathematics. The marking in some subjects was very helpful and informative in helping pupils to improve, as in history. Pupils behave well in lessons and when they are not directly supervised; a few immature pupils, mainly boys, require close supervision.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

As the school opened in September 2001 with Year 7 pupils only, it is not yet possible to make the usual national comparisons of performance in Year 9 National Curriculum tests or in GCSE examinations.

1. When pupils in Years 7 and 8 entered the school, their attainment spanned the full range and was average overall. This is shown by their results in the Year 6 National Curriculum tests and other extensive testing undertaken by the school. The school chose to enter the first year group to join the school in September 2001 for the voluntary Year 7 National Curriculum tests in English and mathematics in the summer of 2002. These tests are not a statutory requirement (as are those in Year 6 and Year 9), but provide objective evidence of pupils' performance. The results showed marked improvement in girls' and boys' performance when their Year 6 National Curriculum performance was compared with that in the Year 7 tests, particularly in mathematics. Results indicated that these pupils (currently in Year 8) had achieved well during their first year in the school. This process of testing is to be repeated for the current Year 7 pupils. The school has also recently tested pupils by use of teachers' assessment testing internal to the school. These results also indicate that both Years 7 and 8 have raised their standards in English, mathematics, science and ICT during the current academic year and have achieved well.
2. From the testing of pupils that the school regularly undertakes, it is able to set itself targets to be attained in Year 9 National Curriculum tests and in GCSE examinations. The targets that are to be aimed for appear to be very challenging, but realistic.
3. In the work seen during the inspection, standards were above those usually expected of pupils in Years 7 and 8 at this point in the school year. Pupils were seen to be achieving well overall, and making good progress. Of the different groups of pupils in the school, there was little difference seen in the performance of girls and boys from all ethnic backgrounds. The school has admitted many more boys than girls and the few behavioural difficulties – for example, a few fixed-term exclusions in the current year – apply only to boys. However, in the lessons seen and the quality of pupils' work analysed, there was little difference in performance of the two sexes. The most talented pupils in each subject are not yet formally identified and, therefore, it is not possible to judge whether these pupils are making the progress that they should.
4. Pupils with special educational needs usually attain the standards that their teachers expect of them and sometimes do better than expected. Most pupils make good progress in working towards the targets set for them in their individual education plans. In whole-class lessons, there is no significant difference between the progress of pupils with special educational needs and the progress of other pupils. This is because work is usually well matched to their needs, and also because of the very good support they receive from the learning support tutors. Pupils also make good progress in withdrawal sessions in small groups because of the well-focused teaching and their own positive attitudes to learning.
5. Some pupils use English as an additional language and a very few come to the school knowing little English. The school has begun to make careful records of all pupils' academic progress, but has not yet categorised pupils with English as an additional language as a separate group, nor compared their performance with that of other

groups of pupils. However, the vast majority of these pupils were seen to be progressing as well as others in their classes and achieving as well as might reasonably be expected. The co-ordinator for special educational needs, who has oversight of these pupils' progress, is aware of a small amount of underachievement in the case of two pupils and is taking action to enable them to improve. The very few who joined the school knowing little English are making rapid progress with the help of the extra support provided.

6. Pupils' standards in literacy and numeracy are above those usually found by pupils in Year 8, and they achieve well in their use of these basic skills. Both literacy and numeracy are timetabled and are provided across an innovative curriculum, which aims to develop these skills and other competences.
7. In the subject work seen during the inspection, pupils were reaching standards above those usually found by this point in Year 8, and achieving well in English, mathematics and science. For example, in English, pupils read fluently and with good understanding. Most written work is accurate and well presented. In mathematics, pupils handle data well individually. In science, they research the lives of famous scientists competently and extend their knowledge of the subject well. Pupils attain well above the standards usually expected for their age groups in ICT. They use equipment independently with much skill and confidence and achieve very well. In citizenship, history, music and physical education, pupils are achieving well and reaching standards above those usually expected in Year 8. They are achieving satisfactorily in art and design, design and technology, geography and religious education and reaching the standards expected nationally. Their achievement is unsatisfactory in modern foreign languages in which there have been difficulties in maintaining continuity of staffing. Consequently, pupils' skills of speaking in the foreign languages have deteriorated from lack of practice and their standards are, overall, below what they should be. However, new staff have been recruited in this subject and these teachers will soon take up their posts.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Pupils' attitudes to the school are good. They show considerable enthusiasm for the use of ICT throughout the school and greatly enjoy having individual laptop computers. Pupils show their positive attitudes to the school by being prepared to take an active part in lessons. They concentrate well and work with a sense of purpose. Pupils are encouraged to think for themselves and form their own views. They demonstrate a willingness to do this and are ready to exchange ideas among themselves and learn from one another. Pupils have the confidence to ask questions as well as answer them. Sometimes, this confidence turns into arrogance which leads to negative attitudes in a few pupils.
9. Standards of behaviour are good overall. In many lessons, pupils behave very well and this helps them to learn effectively. There are a few pupils who behave badly, and this sometimes interferes with the learning of others. This sort of behaviour, often associated with an indifferent attitude to work, occurs mainly among boys. Behaviour around the school is very good. Pupils move calmly between lessons and mix sociably at break and lunchtime. They are polite and courteous towards visitors. Although most pupils behave with friendliness and consideration towards others, there is some bullying. In the school's first year, there was only one fixed-term exclusion. There have been more this year so far, but the level is still low. All exclusions involved boys and were for bad behaviour, including some bullying. There have been no permanent exclusions. Pupils with special educational needs have positive attitudes to their work and to school life in general. They usually behave well and have very good

relationships with their teachers and fellow students and respond very well to the high quality of care that they receive from the learning support tutors.

10. Pupils respond particularly well to the school's provision for their personal development. As part of the competences on which the curriculum is based, pupils are taught how to organise their approach to work. They show that they are ready to accept this responsibility and manage their own learning. This is seen in their ability to work independently, either in groups or as individuals. Another example of this very good response is pupils' punctuality to lessons, for which there are no bells to summon or remind them. Pupils are also ready to accept responsibility within the school community as hall monitors or as members of the elected campus council. Relationships are very good among pupils from all ethnic backgrounds. They are equally very good between pupils and teachers. This also helps learning.
11. Attendance is good. The overall rate of attendance in the school's first year, 2001/2002, was 96.4 per cent. Figures for the current year, so far, are 93.56 per cent. There was hardly any unauthorised absence in the first year. In the current year, the rate is 0.04 per cent, below the national median. The rate of authorised absence during the present year is, currently, 6.4 per cent.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor.

12. The teaching is good in both Year 7 and Year 8. It enables pupils to learn well. Teaching was good or better in almost two-thirds of the 60 lessons seen. Eighteen of the 60 lessons seen were of very good quality. Two lessons of the 60 seen were not at least satisfactory and, in these, the methods chosen did not meet pupils' learning needs closely enough. Literacy, numeracy, mathematics and science are well taught. Teaching and learning in most English lessons are satisfactory. However, the good teaching of literacy in other subjects enables pupils to achieve well in English. ICT was very well taught and teachers' confidence in teaching this subject enabled pupils to learn successfully and to achieve very well in it. The teaching of most other subjects, including citizenship, was good. Art and design and design and technology were satisfactorily taught. Permanent appointments have now been made for the teaching of modern foreign languages but, currently, teaching is not enabling pupils to learn well enough and to make the progress that they should.
13. The good teaching that girls and boys equally receive meets their differing needs well in both year groups. Pupils with special educational needs are generally well taught. In most lessons, teachers are successful in matching their teaching styles and learning materials to these pupils' needs, and ensure that the pupils know what they should do to succeed. This is especially true of teaching in the withdrawal lessons with small groups, where the very good relationships between staff and pupils have a positive impact on learning. However, on occasions, pupils have difficulty in making progress because they are expected to do too much too quickly, and sometimes they find the texts that are used too demanding. The teaching of pupils who use English as an additional language is good. Teachers are aware of who these pupils are. All of these pupils follow well the information provided by teachers from the guidance given in class and, consequently, learn well. The very few pupils at an early stage of learning English learn very well, both within mainstream lessons with other pupils and in a group withdrawn from mainstream lessons taken by the co-ordinator for special educational needs, who has overall oversight and responsibility for all these pupils' progress. Although the co-ordinator has no specialist qualifications in teaching English as an

additional language, the teaching in the small separate group is effective and appropriate to pupils' needs. Although talented pupils have been identified in some subjects, the school has not yet formally identified these pupils in every subject. Consequently, subject teachers are not yet sure how to stretch these pupils in all subjects.

14. The teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy is a priority. Subject teachers across the curriculum contribute very well to the teaching of these skills and, overall, literacy and numeracy are well taught. In Year 7, the teachers of literacy also teach the same pupils for English, geography, history and religious education and the teaching of these subjects reinforces the teaching of literacy very well. In general, subject teachers extend pupils' learning of the skills of literacy and numeracy far more effectively than is usually found in secondary schools. For example, lessons across the curriculum often gave pupils extensive practice in reading, writing and speaking. Teachers' marking of written work provided much guidance to pupils on writing accurately and in paragraphs, and helped them to extend their written skills very well. In a very good Year 8 lesson on citizenship, for example, the teacher helped the pupils to overcome inaccuracies of spelling by helping with corrections and by the effective use of dictionaries. The very effective guidance and direction that they received on how to manage written work enabled them to express themselves in a more mature, effective style. Teachers also develop pupils' numerical skills well, particularly in mathematics and science. Numeracy was also developed well in other subjects. For example, in a very good Year 7 physical education lesson, the pupils were helped by the teacher to select an appropriate pace for running long distances by calculating the times and distances involved.
15. The teachers plan their lessons well. The lesson's objectives are made clear to the class and shared by all. For example, a very well taught Year 8 geography lesson on tourism was very well planned to meet the specific needs of different pupils. Consequently, the response from all pupils was very good; their interest was engaged and all worked enthusiastically. Most lessons stretch pupils well and some are very challenging learning experiences. A very good Year 7 history lesson required the pupils to take either a French or an English point of view on the causes of the Hundred Years War. Pupils were expected to gain an understanding of the situation for themselves from the evidence and information provided and from discussion with others, and to present their perspectives to the rest of the class. The lesson placed much responsibility on the pupils to find out about the subject for themselves which they did very well by using their initiative effectively to extend their understanding of the topic.
16. Teachers use a good range of methods. They help pupils to understand the subject well by clear presentation. For example, an impressive and stimulating introduction to Shakespeare's 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' for the whole of Year 7 enabled all pupils to gain insights into, and to relate their existing experience very well to, the new topic. Teachers' explanations and directions to their classes are clear. They question pupils effectively and often phrase questions to provoke thought and response. Work is often organised in small groups and each individual is expected to contribute to discussion and assemble evidence for presentations to the rest of the class in due course. The teachers support this work actively. They co-ordinate their work well with that of the learning support tutors who are present in most lessons and ensure that pupils are very well supported individually. Very occasionally, teachers choose unsuitable methods and do not give their classes the guidance that they need.
17. The management of pupils is good. In many lessons, very good relationships between pupils and teachers ensure that pupils' attitudes to learning are positive in the classroom. However, in a few lessons seen, pupils' behaviour was unsatisfactory, but in

the vast majority, they responded well to teachers and learned successfully what teachers intended. For example, excellent relationships between the teacher and the pupils in a very good Year 8 option lesson on virtual reality techniques in ICT enabled the pupils to learn very well in an effective partnership with the teacher. Very good relationships give pupils the confidence and incentive to work hard.

18. Teachers use resources very well in many lessons. The laptop computer which each pupil has available enables teachers to use ICT freely in any lesson to extend subject learning. This practice was seen in many lessons, including, for example, in art and design, where websites were used to research visual resources for Islamic art.
19. The teachers' subject knowledge and understanding are satisfactory. In Year 7, several subjects are taught by the same teachers, but their knowledge of individual subjects is sufficient to take pupils' learning forward well. Very good teamwork and joint planning of lessons ensure that learning is effective and teachers gain from each other's subject expertise. Changes of specialist teachers in modern foreign languages have, latterly, interrupted pupils' regular practice of speaking in the foreign languages and, consequently, their skills of speaking have deteriorated. However, new permanent appointments for the teaching of modern foreign languages have now been made.
20. The use of homework was considered a weakness by a minority of parents in the questionnaire that they completed before the inspection. During the inspection, teachers set homework consistently and it was suitably challenging to enable pupils to extend their learning well. Teachers' marking of homework and classwork was of inconsistent quality. Some was very helpful to pupils to enable them to improve their standards, but some marking, for example in English and mathematics, was not helpful enough to pupils.

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

21. The school provides a good range of learning opportunities for pupils in both year groups. It has adopted a very innovative approach to providing the curriculum and is one of eight pilot schools that is participating in a national curricular project. This is organised to ensure that pupils' skills and competences are well developed in all subject areas and that links can be made between subjects when appropriate. The competences are intended to enable pupils to learn by being able to do things for themselves, to relate to people and to manage situations and information. The skills include application of number, communication, ICT, working with others and problem solving. The school is providing the National Curriculum well through this innovatory approach.
22. In Year 7, pupils are taught by one member of staff for several subjects for much of the year. This approach provides a smooth transition from primary school and promotes pupils' security and confidence as well as helping them to practise essential skills at the same time as they gain subject knowledge and understanding. Many subjects are provided through a range of themes or topics during the year and, although some subjects have difficulty in establishing coherent links to the themes, the balance of time given to subjects is satisfactory. However, an exception is the time allotted to modern foreign languages; this does not provide regular enough opportunity for pupils' practice of the subject in which their standards are, currently, below average.
23. The statutory requirements for the National Curriculum and for religious education are met. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education includes satisfactory planning and inclusion of sex education and drugs prevention within the curriculum for

Years 7 to 9. Overall, planning and schemes of work for most subjects are very thorough.

24. In Year 8, the curriculum is also based on skills and competences, but each subject is taught separately. Good curricular planning ensures that skills are reinforced across subjects and highlighted to pupils in introductory lessons on new topics, in educational visits and in special events. For example, pupils make visits to Canterbury and Rochester to extend their studies of Chaucer and Dickens; science week is enhanced by a visiting planetarium. For one afternoon every week, Year 8 pupils are able to choose from an optional list of subjects which they study for half a term. The school has provided this enrichment so that pupils can learn new skills or develop existing strengths or interests. A range of visiting speakers have provided a specialist input. Although most of these options for enrichment of pupils' learning are successful, not all provide appropriate learning objectives or ensure that all pupils gain what they should from these experiences.
25. The curriculum is accessible to all pupils. Withdrawal from the mainstream curriculum of some pupils with special educational needs in small groups gives them good opportunities to improve their basic skills in numeracy and literacy. Individual education plans are effective in ensuring that pupils' particular needs are identified and catered for. Short-term targets in work, organisation and behaviour are relevant and realistic. All pupils with English as an additional language have access to the whole curriculum in common with other pupils and are withdrawn for extra help in small groups where appropriate.
26. There are very good opportunities for extra-curricular activities which are recognised and appreciated by parents. Many activities are offered, for example in sports, drama, music and ICT. Pupils have the opportunity to participate in many competitions locally in a range of sporting activities. There are many visits to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. All have the opportunity of a trip to France. Some valuable curricular and extra-curricular opportunities are provided to extend the learning of some talented pupils. For example, the work arising from the Year 8 ICT optional virtual reality course greatly enriches the learning of some talented individuals. However, the most talented pupils are not formally identified in most subjects and, consequently, neither curricular nor extra-curricular provision is yet sure to meet all needs.
27. A key purpose of the school is to develop links with the community. Liaison with local primary schools is already good, and very good with the primary school that shares the campus building with the school. The two schools work closely together to ensure that there is appropriate curriculum development. Links with neighbouring secondary schools are growing, and the present deputy headteacher is currently seconded from one of these. Community links with the wider national and international communities are impressive. The school and the campus already have both national and international reputations for originality and innovation. The headteacher has presented the school and its curriculum to national and international audiences, and school and campus have had many foreign visitors who want to learn more about the innovatory nature of the school and its activities. There are established links with universities – for example, for the training of teachers and for research into the nature of the new school. Links to establish and enhance provision for new ICT in the school are strong with business and industry; connections with a major electronics company have been very helpful in ensuring that all pupils have access to computers across the curriculum. The school is planning to extend its business links further, partly to gain sponsors for further development. Links with the local public are seen in the school and local community's shared use of the public library within the campus building. However, links with other

locally based organisations and cultural and religious centres are, as yet, generally less well developed.

28. The school's aims state explicitly that it intends to provide for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It achieves this very well. Curricular planning relates to the development of curricular competences for all pupils, as part of the innovative curriculum it uses. Most competences refer directly to aspects of pupils' personal development. As a result, all schemes of work identify ways in which topics can support pupils' personal development and teachers are aware of these. Pupils with special educational needs have good opportunities for personal development through activities which are designed to improve their social skills, such as working in small groups in drama. They also develop self-confidence through friendships in year groups and from the individual help given by learning support tutors.
29. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. The curriculum, which links some subjects together in Year 7, enables pupils to make connections between different aspects of their learning. This was seen in a Year 7 science lesson about food chains, when a group of boys expressed their amazement at the importance and complexity of inter-relationships in nature. Teachers value pupils' questions and often give them time to develop their own ideas. For example, pupils in a drama class were encouraged to reflect on issues of unequal status and power through a presentation by a visiting theatre company. As a result, a black pupil and his white friend were confident enough to express their mutual concern that there are few black politicians in Parliament. Similar opportunities for reflection on spiritual attributes are provided in religious education, to link, for example, the ideas of faith, power and kindness to symbols and pictures through the use of Internet resources. Teachers in this new school are establishing a climate in which pupils can flourish and respect each other; pupils are regularly reminded of this through the school's values that are printed in their planners and displayed in each classroom. Some Muslim boys asked for a space in which they could pray each day and this has been provided for them. However, teachers miss some opportunities to encourage further spiritual reflection. The school does not meet statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship. Although year assemblies provide well for pupils' moral and social development, there is no time set aside for reflection or prayer.
30. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. Moral values of honesty and mutual respect are strongly enforced and modelled by teachers in their relationships and interactions with pupils. In personal tutorials, teachers encourage individuals and small groups of pupils to evaluate their own work and behaviour. Pupils are helped to think about the results of their actions on other people. As a result, they are prepared to discuss occasional incidents of bullying openly, confident in the knowledge that teachers will deal with matters appropriately. Teachers regularly raise moral issues for discussion in lessons, as in a history lesson when pupils were asked to consider whether the Hundred Years War was a just war.
31. Social development is also very well provided for. Pupils are elected to the campus council which meets regularly and provides a very good opportunity for them to exercise responsibility. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to work co-operatively in many lessons and pupils respond well. In Year 7, a unit of work on sport and leisure helps pupils to take a variety of roles as members of teams and encourages them to support others in their team. In Year 8, a unit on relationships and communications considers the importance of good communication in successful relationships. In literacy lessons, pupils showed their understanding of this by explaining that a character in Robert Swindell's 'Stone Cold' became homeless because he could not communicate with his family. Assemblies are held to praise pupils' respect for other people and

special awards are given to those who have been particularly good friends to others in need.

32. The school also provides very well for pupils' cultural development. It particularly emphasises the importance of pupils' understanding of, and respect for, other cultures and traditions. Much of pupils' art work is inspired by other cultures, as shown by displays of Islamic, Aztec and Indonesian art. All Year 7 pupils have an opportunity to correspond with a pen-pal in China, and Chinese culture and cooking is a very popular optional course for pupils in Year 8. Pupils are also introduced to six major religions in Year 7 and have the opportunity of visiting a Sikh temple in Year 8. Issues of racism are well addressed in the context of current events. For example, during the Afghan and Iraqi wars, events were discussed regularly so that pupils were helped to understand the views of people from different countries. The school is now developing further links with other countries. Three teachers from a school in Malta have visited and some teachers have visited Germany, for a project involving schools in France, Denmark and Latvia, to establish contacts that will further benefit pupils' understanding of other countries in the future. All Year 7 pupils visited France last year. The school indicates that it reinforces cultural values through photographic display and, for example, through recordings shown on the plasma screens of the range of its cultural activities. However, display of this range of activities was not seen during the inspection.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

33. The school looks after its pupils very well. Members of staff make sure that they know pupils well. One important factor in this is the relatively small size of the school. The innovative use of modern technology is another. Both enable particularly detailed records to be kept and provide ease of access for members of staff to use the information available to help and support pupils. The school aims to teach pupils how to learn and how to manage their own learning for themselves from the guidance they get from teachers. As part of this process, pupils have weekly interviews with their personal tutor and a learning support tutor in a combination of small group and individual interviews known as 'one-to-ones'. These weekly reviews provide very good opportunities for pupils to learn how to evaluate their academic and personal progress. Almost without exception, this system is used by tutors to provide support of very high quality for pupils and encourages them to do as well as they can.
34. The school's procedures to monitor and improve attendance are good. Parents are contacted on the first day if their children are not in school and the absence has not already been notified. However, some technological problems persist with the school's method of recording attendance, and manual records supplement the system when necessary.
35. Procedures to monitor and promote good behaviour are very good. Here again, the school makes highly efficient use of modern technology. Pupils' behaviour, both good and bad, is recorded so that praise can be given where due and sanctions applied when necessary. Such detailed records help the school to be consistent. However, the emphasis is on praising achievement; PRAISE is the acronym for the school's system of rewards and is explained to pupils in their planners.
36. There are good procedures for child protection, which follow local guidelines. Good routine health and safety procedures are in place. However, the condition of the sports field causes concern as in some areas the surface is unsafe. The school is aware of this and its use is accordingly restricted.

37. The procedures to monitor pupils' personal development are very good because of the frequent, regular opportunities which pupils have to consult their personal tutors. These interviews encourage pupils to manage their learning and personal progress. Academic progress forms part of these consultations and is increasingly supported by ICT to track this. Seeing on screen the areas where they are doing well, and where they could and should be doing better, stimulates pupils to work as well as they can. The school's approach combines to provide very good educational and personal support and guidance for pupils.
38. The basis for very good assessment procedures is being developed in the school. Performance data are recorded electronically to help monitor the progress of all pupils, and all teachers have open access to this. The system provides a comprehensive range of data on pupils' academic performance and, currently, concentrates on English, mathematics, science and ICT. The data includes information on special educational needs (where relevant), results of Year 6 National Curriculum tests and subsequent optional National Curriculum tests in Year 7. This information is supplemented by commercial tests and is used to predict outcomes for use in reviews of pupils' progress. All pupils are provided with a personal learning plan, which includes all assessment information together with learning targets. These are regularly monitored and negotiated by each pupil individually with their personal tutor. National Curriculum targets are rigorously tracked and underachievement can be easily identified. It provides a basis on which to inform staff, pupils and parents of progress at regular intervals. Assessment strategies are increasingly being developed across all subjects. At this stage in the school's development, it is premature to identify fairly what influence assessment has had upon curriculum planning.
39. The school monitors the performance of pupils with special educational needs in a very effective way. The systems for identifying and supporting pupils in need of extra help are very good. Individual education plans give precise information on support arrangements and appropriate learning activities. Teachers and learning support tutors usually work together to good effect, although the support is not sufficiently well co-ordinated in some lessons. In general, the learning support tutors know their pupils well and have a strong commitment to ensuring the wellbeing of all pupils in need of support. The very good relationships which are built up make an important contribution towards pupils' academic progress and personal development. The good rapport between the school and its partner primary schools, and with the external agencies, ensures that pupils can move confidently from one phase of education to another, and benefit from specialist help when needed.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

40. On balance, the school's partnership with parents is satisfactory. Parents' views of the school are broadly satisfactory. More parents than is usual returned the pre-inspection questionnaire. Most of these parents think that their children like the school. Almost without exception these parents believe that the school expects their children to work hard and achieve their best. Parents also feel that the school is approachable should they have problems. They think that the school provides an interesting range of extra-curricular activities. Inspectors agree with these parents' favourable views.
41. A significant number of parents who returned the questionnaire do not think that they are kept well informed about how their children are getting on. Many of these parents also feel that the school does not work sufficiently closely with them. They do not think that their children get the right amount of work to do at home, nor do they consider that standards of behaviour in the school are good. Inspectors consider that, overall, parents are well informed and that the school endeavours to work closely with them.

The inspection team found that homework set was appropriate. They consider that pupils behave well in lessons and around the school, although a few individuals require close supervision. The views of the parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting were generally critical, yet they acknowledged that they had not voiced their concerns to the school.

42. The school tries hard to develop effective links with parents and, on balance, the links it has are satisfactory. These links include much information both about the school itself and the progress that the children make. However, existing links do not have the impact which the school would like or that parents seem to expect. Much is on offer. The headteacher has individual meetings with all parents before their children join the school. There is an appropriate programme of consultative evenings; two in Year 7 and one in Year 8. These meetings are with the children's personal tutors. The current system does not provide routine consultation with subject teachers (as some parents would like) but this is arranged if parents ask for one. Few do. Parents can also come to the weekly review sessions, but again, not many do. Full reports give good information about progress; those for Year 8 pupils are clearer on what pupils can and cannot do and what they need to do to improve than those for Year 7. There are some inconsistencies between subject areas. Newsletters are sent home weekly. Messages in planners are checked. There is a wealth of information about the school on its website. Considered overall, the school provides good information for parents, even though it is not perceived as such by a substantial percentage of those parents who replied to the pre-inspection questionnaire. A possible explanation for this paradox is that full reports are not issued until the end of the spring or start of the summer terms and parents do not take up opportunities to see subject teachers or come to reviews earlier. This was supported by opportunities to talk to parents at a consultative evening for parents and teachers held during the inspection, where the parents who spoke to inspectors said that they were pleased with the information about progress in reports.
43. The level of parents' involvement in the school and the contribution that they make to their children's learning is also satisfactory. They ensure that their children attend regularly. Attendance at consultative evenings is high. A higher-than-average number of parents showed interest in what the school is providing by returning the pre-inspection questionnaire. However, attempts to organise a parent-teacher association foundered. The home-school agreement was produced in consultation with parents, but signed copies are still being returned.
44. The school has a good partnership with parents of pupils with special educational needs. Parents usually attend the reviews of their children's progress and comment on their achievement. They are appreciative of the hard work put in by school staff in helping their children to gain the confidence to make progress.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

45. The school is very well led. The headteacher shared the planning of this new school with the local education authority and the architects and builders. The challenge of starting a new school in a locality where there was no educational precedent was considerable. The headteacher's exceptionally clear vision for the school's development has contributed greatly to its success – at this very early stage in its development. The school is intended to be a major focus for the local community, which lacks the points of reference which are usually found in most places. For example, as yet, there are no churches or other places of worship; there is no separate community centre for the continuing education of the public at large. The campus, which houses this secondary school, its partner primary and a small public library, is now the key focus for the local community. The headteacher's and governors' powerful

commitment to education for all from age three to 16 years and for continuing opportunities for lifelong learning for the adult community of Chafford Hundred remain clear.

46. The headteacher, supported by the governors, has initiated much innovation into the practice of the school. For example, the imaginative provision of laptop computers for every pupil and the high priority given to enhancing teachers' and pupils' ICT skills have contributed to standards in this subject that are already well above those usually found reached by pupils in Year 8. The headteacher overcame the difficulties of providing the full National Curriculum with very few teachers when the school opened; participation as one of eight pilot schools in a national curricular project ensured that the full curriculum was available.
47. The governors make a very good contribution to the school. Their vision for the school's role within the community is very clear. Governors are enthusiastic and very committed to working with the school to ensure its success. They are very supportive of the headteacher and appreciate her commitment and contribution to the school's development. They inform themselves about standards by visiting, meeting staff and pupils and observing lessons. They take up the training opportunities available to enhance their skills. They do not provide the opportunity for an act of collective worship for all pupils each day.
48. Much emphasis is given to teamwork at all levels in the school. The leadership group of the headteacher and senior staff work very well together and contribute different strengths to the leadership and management of the school. The leadership and management of subjects are good overall. The leadership of citizenship, geography and history is very good and a closely co-ordinated team of teachers work together very well with much enthusiasm and commitment to provide a co-ordinated curriculum in Year 7. Although pupils and staff are still relatively few in number, the headteacher and senior staff have ensured that subjects have effective leadership. For example, the assistant headteacher has temporary oversight for, and management of, science and mathematics. However, as the school and staff grow in size, all subjects will require specific leadership and management.
49. The leadership of special educational needs provides very good educational direction, and responsibilities are very well managed. Statutory requirements in respect of pupils with statements of special educational needs are met. The co-ordinator for special educational needs also has responsibility for all pupils with English as an additional language. Their academic performance is closely analysed and particular areas of concern identified. However, these pupils' formal records neither include their level of literacy in reading and writing in their first languages on arrival at the school, nor the length of time they have been in this country. These questions are asked in informal interviews when they arrive at the school, so that pupils can be encouraged to take a GCSE examination in their first language if this is appropriate, either at the age of 16 or well before this. For example, one pupil is currently receiving support in her first language at a local international school in preparation for the GCSE examination.
50. The management of the school, overall, is very good. The standards attained by pupils have been monitored and evaluated objectively by use of the school's voluntary use of Year 7 National Curriculum tests in 2002. This practice is currently being repeated for the pupils in Year 7. The school's careful collection, analysis and use of performance data from other testing are effective means of monitoring and confirming standards. Performance management was used imaginatively from the opening of the school onwards to overcome the difficulty of a school with very few teachers. Checking on the quality of teaching has led to the dismissal of some temporary teachers. The school's

development planning is thorough and the means of evaluating the relative success of the targets identified are clear. Parents whose children attend this new and innovatory school are naturally very concerned to receive information on how their children are getting on, and the school provides considerable information to parents. However, some parents remain unsure about their children's progress (as the questionnaire and meeting for parents before the inspection indicate) and management has yet to ensure that all parents are fully confident that they are well enough informed on how their children are getting on.

51. The school has used the generous funding effectively that has been provided for starting the school. The specific grant for special educational needs is used well for its designated purpose. Generous funding is matched by good teaching and good achievement to give a satisfactory value for money at this very early stage in the school's development. Best value principles are very well applied. The standards shown by testing and those seen during the inspection were good, and pupils had made measurably good progress since entering the school. The school challenges itself very well by its innovatory curriculum and the very good range of extra-curricular opportunities provided by a small staff. Consultation with pupils is provided through a school council system, interviews and individual meetings with personal tutors each week. Parents were consulted by questionnaire at the end of the school's first year and they gave it strong endorsement. The systems for managing competition for services are in place, now that the school is to manage its own funding, and are very competently managed, as shown by a recent audit.
52. The ratio of teachers to pupils is exceptionally favourable. The relatively inexperienced teaching staff are suitably qualified to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. The teaching of modern foreign languages is currently by temporary staff, although permanent appointments have now been made and will take effect shortly. The teachers are well supported by proportionately more learning support tutors than are usually found in schools of this size, but who are very helpful to pupils' learning and achievement. Provision of technical and administrative support is good. Despite considerable difficulties in recruiting subject specialist teachers – for example, in modern foreign languages – management has been very active and imaginative in recruiting and appointing staff. Sufficient teachers to cover the curriculum have been appointed for the coming academic year. There is a very good match of teachers and support staff to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs.
53. The procedures for the induction of new teachers to the school and to the profession are good. Dedicated time for tutorials on professional development and constructive feedback on teaching are well provided. However, effectiveness is reduced because inexperienced leadership in some subjects sometimes makes the monitoring of teaching and the resulting guidance to colleagues less effective than it could be. The school is already a good provider of initial teacher training. Some learning support tutors have been motivated to train as teachers themselves, because they have been inspired by the professionalism of the teachers they see working in the school.
54. The new purpose-built accommodation is very good and has received national recognition for the quality and originality of its design and construction. The accommodation for science is excellent, although not all laboratories are yet fully equipped. Design and technology is equally well provided for. The design of many areas encourages civilised behaviour, and the flow of pupils around the school is impressive. Bright and interesting displays that celebrate pupils' subject achievement are apparent. The accommodation is very well adapted for access for wheelchairs. The management of the accommodation is very good and there is clear awareness of remaining shortcomings. In art and design, the absence of a space for a kiln restricts

the range of activities in the subject. There are problems with the acoustics in many rooms, including the hall, that create difficulties for teaching and learning. The school has been granted funding to rectify the problem. Large sections of the school sports field are hazardous to pupils engaged in physical activities. Some parts of the athletics track and pitches are badly rutted, littered with sharp stones and patches of turf netting. This presents a health and safety issue and restricts the teaching and learning of physical education. The admission of pupils to the school in numbers in excess of those for whom the accommodation was designed already raises concerns for overcrowding as one further year group each year is admitted. The headteacher, governors and parents are aware of this growing problem.

55. Learning resources, overall, are very good. They meet pupils' learning needs very well. Provision for ICT is excellent and every teacher and pupil has use of a personal laptop computer with broadband Internet access. The system provides highly flexible access to ICT – in every lesson, if necessary – and contributes very well to pupils' advanced standards in ICT already apparent across the two year groups. The system ingeniously enables recharging of computers in specially equipped lockers. All pupils can access the school's Intranet system, which runs on a wireless network. Electronic whiteboards are in frequent use in classrooms and PowerPoint presentations are regularly used to stimulate pupils' interest in learning. In most subjects, resources are very good and well managed, although there are some deficiencies in modern foreign languages. The community library that is shared by the two campus schools and members of the public lacks a good range of books for school use. However, collections of books can be requested by the school on any topic and provided for use in classrooms. The strategic planning of resources for the present and future needs of the school is very good.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

56. To raise standards and the quality of educational provision further, the school should:
- (1) resolve the growing problem of admitting pupils each year in excess of the numbers of places planned for in the accommodation currently available; work closely with all partners, including the local authority, to uphold the key purpose of the school as a focus for the local community; (*See paragraph 54.*)
 - (2) provide further for the learning needs of the most talented pupils in most subjects; identify these pupils in each subject and provide opportunities and resources to meet their needs; (*See paragraphs 3, 13, 26.*)
 - (3) improve the behaviour of the small minority of pupils, mainly boys, whose behaviour occasionally prevents them and others from achieving as well as they could; provide further training for teachers, tutors and all staff in managing behaviour; (*See paragraphs 9, 17.*)
 - (4) make the sports field wholly safe for the teaching and learning of physical education; ensure that planned improvements take place as soon as possible with the full support of the local education authority. (*See paragraphs 54, 108.*)

In addition to the key issues for improvement listed above, the school should consider including in its action plan the following issues:

- (1) consider with parents the information on their children's academic progress that parents say they want; consult further with them to explain the information provided and to determine what more they want; (*See paragraph 42.*)

- (2) provide an act of worship for all pupils each day and, appropriately, include time for reflection for pupils and staff; (See *paragraphs 29, 47.*)
- (3) improve the marking of pupils' work by ensuring that it is consistently good across all subjects. (See *paragraphs 20, 59, 62, 75.*)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	60
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	18	21	19	2	0	0
Percentage	0.0	30.0	35.0	31.7	3.3	0.0	0.0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y8
Number of pupils on the school's roll	261
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	12

Special educational needs	Y7–Y8
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	46

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	20

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.6
National comparative data	7.8

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	1.2

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

Ethnic background of pupils

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

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
211	1	0
1	0	0
10	0	0
4	0	0
1	0	0
4	0	0
1	0	0
10	0	0
1	0	0
2	0	0
3	0	0
1	0	0
6	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
2	0	0
1	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y8

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	19.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	14.6

Education support staff: Y7 – Y8

Total number of education support staff	21
Total aggregate hours worked per week	460

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y8

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	66
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y8

Key Stage 3	25.3
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2002-3
	£
Total income	1,240,288
Total expenditure	1,127,098
Expenditure per pupil	4,318
Balance brought forward from previous year	-140,020
Balance carried forward to next year	113,190

Funding is not yet accurately comparable nationally because of its initial funding as a new school.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	15
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
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	261
Number of questionnaires returned	130

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	40	52	5	3	0
My child is making good progress in school.	28	55	6	2	9
Behaviour in the school is good.	23	47	14	8	9
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	19	52	22	7	1
The teaching is good.	19	54	12	2	12
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	16	35	30	17	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	35	53	6	1	5
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	44	52	2	1	2
The school works closely with parents.	15	42	28	12	3
The school is well led and managed.	19	49	13	5	15
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	28	53	11	2	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	46	44	6	2	2

Other issues raised by parents

Some parents expressed concern that the number of pupils admitted to the school each year was in excess of what the school was built to accommodate, as one providing for pupils in Years 7 to 11.

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

ENGLISH and literacy across the curriculum

Overall, the quality of provision in English and literacy across the curriculum is **good**.

Strengths

- Most pupils achieve well.
- Some English lessons are very well taught by specialist teachers.
- Planning for the teaching of literacy skills through detailed schemes of work is good.
- The good teaching of literacy across the curriculum helps pupils to achieve well in English.

Areas for improvement

- Teachers do not stretch the most competent pupils to learn as well as they could.
- The quality of teaching is inconsistent.
- Much marking of pupils' work is unsatisfactory.

57. Pupils learn English as part of the combined curriculum. Some lessons are identified as English lessons, especially in Year 8. However, the school emphasises the importance of teachers in all subjects contributing to the development of pupils' knowledge and understanding of English and literacy. As a result, even though learning in discrete English lessons is only satisfactory, the good teaching of literacy in other subjects enables pupils to achieve well in English. Current Year 8 pupils entered for the interim National Curriculum tests in English and mathematics at the end of Year 7 in 2002. The results showed that pupils had made good progress during their first year at the school. However, they did not do as well in English as they did in mathematics.
58. On entry to the school, pupils' attainment in English is close to the national average. By Year 8, standards are above those expected for pupils of this age. Pupils from all ethnic groups achieve well. Those who use English as an additional language achieve as well as other pupils. Pupils with moderate and specific learning difficulties make good progress, partly because of the valuable extra help that they receive in lessons from learning support tutors. In English lessons, Year 8 pupils listen very attentively to the teacher and each other. They express their ideas clearly and confidently in class discussion, when given the opportunity. They read aloud fluently, with good expression and understanding. Most pupils are able to identify ways in which writers use different literary techniques, although few are yet able to show how these techniques are used for effect. Pupils take care with handwriting, and their spelling and punctuation are usually accurate, although girls write more neatly than boys. In English lessons, pupils write in a narrow range of styles and rarely produce very imaginative, descriptive work. However, their writing in history and science, for example, shows that they are able to do so when teachers insist on it. Higher attaining pupils achieve satisfactorily, but teachers do not encourage them enough to make a personal response to literature.
59. Teaching and learning in English lessons are satisfactory overall. The quality of teaching is inconsistent and, during the inspection, it was better in Year 7 than in Year 8 lessons. Teachers plan English lessons very carefully and make precise reference to the learning objectives for the pupils in planning. However, they do not always explain the planned purpose of the lesson to the pupils. As a result, in English lessons, pupils are often unsure about what they are expected to learn and how well they are doing. Teachers are aware of the needs of pupils at different levels of attainment and enable learning support tutors to work effectively with pupils with special educational needs.

Although most English teaching is satisfactory, there is some very good teaching. In the best lessons, specialist teachers prepare and use a variety of appropriate resources and teaching methods very well. These maintain pupils' interest and extend their learning at a good pace. For example, Year 7 pupils enjoyed learning about the plot and characters in 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' because they read from a simplified text individually, discussed it as a class, watched extracts from a modern film version and considered how to direct characters on the stage through a computer simulation. In this and several other English lessons, pupils made very good use of their ICT skills, which are well above the levels expected for their age. However, some non-specialist teachers of English do not have sufficiently high expectations of the most competent pupils and do not challenge them to reach higher levels of attainment. Some lessons lack pace and zip, because the teacher dominates the lesson too much and gives insufficient opportunity for pupils to contribute to discussion. Despite this, pupils are very attentive and have positive attitudes in all lessons. The marking of pupils' work in English is unsatisfactory. Much class and homework is left unmarked and teachers provide very little advice for pupils about how to achieve higher standards.

60. Despite the lack of consistently good teaching in English lessons, pupils are still able to achieve well and make good progress in the subject over time. This is because of the good teaching of literacy in several other subjects, especially history, geography, religious education and science; this supports pupils' learning of the skills needed in English lessons well. Teachers of these subjects are well aware of the National Literacy Strategy and planning for the development of pupils' literacy skills is an integral part of all of their schemes of work and lesson plans. Teachers of subjects other than English explain the vocabulary specific to their subjects clearly, and insist on accurate spelling and use of these words. Pupils develop their reading skills well because teachers provide frequent opportunities for them to read aloud, especially in history and religious education. In science lessons, teachers give pupils time to read independently for information and research. Lower attaining pupils receive plenty of support when they are required to write extended pieces of work. However, apart from in history and science, there are generally insufficient opportunities for pupils to write at length for different purposes and in different styles. Schemes of work for music and modern foreign languages do not yet make sufficient reference to opportunities for teaching literacy skills.
61. The leadership and management of English and literacy are good. The temporary absence of the literacy co-ordinator and difficulty, earlier in the year, in finding a replacement specialist teacher of English have adversely affected the quality of English teaching, especially in Year 8. However, the teachers of English are working well as a team to overcome these problems. The Year 7 literacy co-ordinator provides excellent support for the newly qualified and less experienced teachers of English.

MATHEMATICS and numeracy across the curriculum

Overall, the quality of provision in mathematics and in numeracy across the curriculum is **good**.

Strengths

- Teachers plan lessons well.
- Pupils are well practised in taking a share of responsibility for their own learning.
- Pupils use ICT confidently and well to support their learning of the subject.

Areas for improvement

- There are insufficient specialist staff to lead, manage and plan the place of mathematics across the school.
- A whole-school numeracy policy to co-ordinate numerical work is not yet in place.

62. When pupils enter the school, their attainment is average. The evidence from work seen in lessons and in written work to this point in Year 8 indicates that pupils from all ethnic backgrounds, including those with English as an additional language, achieve well for their age group. Higher attaining pupils in Year 8 understand the use of indices, recognise the purpose of probability and use tree-diagrams well. The work of lower attaining pupils shows recent improvement, particularly in number work; some lower attainers could satisfactorily manage negative numbers and competently convert kilograms to grams. However, some work seen was poorly presented and inconsistently marked. There are no national comparisons to be made at Year 8. However, the school entered the pupils currently in Year 8 for optional National Curriculum tests when they reached the end of Year 7 in summer 2002. The results clearly indicate that very good progress was made during Year 7. The improvement in pupils' performance in mathematics in these tests exceeded the standards that they reached in English.
63. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good in Year 7 and in Year 8. The very best teaching ensures that lessons are well planned, with an appropriate balance between whole-class discussion and individual work. Teachers manage their classes well, and the routines for pupils to work independently, where this is appropriate, are well established. Teachers and pupils use ICT with confidence for a good range of varied tasks. In a below average attaining Year 8 class, the lesson focused upon the testing of a theory. The pupils recognised this as such, and used mathematical vocabulary confidently. Many competently discussed the methods they needed to use by recall of knowledge that they had gained from previous lessons. They constructed appropriate frequency tables, analysed data and then used suitable graphs to illustrate their results. Most pupils were at different stages in their programme of work, and the teaching and learning methods chosen by the teacher enabled them to progress well individually. In one lesson, the teaching did not guide the class well enough at the beginning in the work to be undertaken and this reduced the level of learning achieved. However, the teaching overcame this weakness in a subsequent lesson.
64. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is good overall and suitable work is selectively used. The work of the learning support tutors is particularly good; they understand the specific needs of individual pupils well. The support that they provide is invariably welcomed and competently delivered. Individual education plans are readily available and comprehensive. Teachers are very aware of pupils' needs and meet them well.
65. The National Numeracy Strategy is well implemented. All lessons begin with varied activities. These form a part of the expected class routine, promote interest and pupils participate well. Sufficient time is given at the conclusion of lessons for pupils to review, openly discuss and write down what they have learned. ICT is very well provided for, and evidence of its use is seen in all lessons, both by teachers' presentation of the work to be undertaken in lessons and by pupils supporting their own learning competently.
66. Numeracy across the curriculum is currently not yet fully developed or co-ordinated. However, within science, it is generally good. In this subject, for example, pupils use graphical work, make effective use of calculators and apply decimals competently. In

design and technology, data are used appropriately in graphs, and computers are used to investigate timing with use of both conventional and electronic methods. Numeracy is used well in geography when pupils consider co-ordinates and measure scales and distances relating to map work. They interpret data on climates well in graphical work. In physical education, pupils can apply timing in a phased session of endurance running. In art and design, shape was applied to geometric design linked with symmetry patterns. Competent use of chronology was in use in history. However, all this work across subject disciplines currently lacks the co-ordination and direction required from a whole-school numeracy policy.

67. The management of mathematics was weakened by problems arising from difficulties in the recruitment of specialist staff. The assistant headteacher, with the support of the local education authority, has been temporarily assigned to make improvements to subject documentation and schemes of assessment. These tasks have been successfully achieved. It is important now to maintain this momentum with further planning for the subject's development across the school by subject specialists.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- The use of assessment to support pupils' progress is good.
- The teaching is effective in helping pupils to develop the skills to work without direct supervision.
- Extra-curricular activities make the subject relevant and challenging for pupils.

Areas for improvement

- Some presentations in class lack enough visual impact to stimulate interest.
- There is scope to build further on the good practice in use of ICT.
- Some pupils lack a good general knowledge of the natural world.

68. The attainment of pupils from all ethnic backgrounds, including those who use English as an additional language, is above the level expected for their age group by this point in Year 8. They make good progress from their average attainment on entry to the school. The progress of higher attaining pupils and those with special educational needs is particularly good. Pupils are good at carrying out investigations and can predict results, draw conclusions and evaluate their work. They can apply a fair test and they demonstrate good skills in graphical skills. They research topics, such as the solar system, exceptionally well and develop the skills and attitudes necessary for them to be responsible for their own, independent study. In Year 7, pupils are able to build complex food webs, and some discuss the interdependency of the plants and animals within the web, although a lack of general knowledge about the natural world restricts some pupils' progress in this type of work. The results of the school's internal testing of Year 7 pupils in 2002 in the subject represented good value added during the pupils' first year in the school. However, no national comparisons can yet be drawn.

69. Overall, the quality of teaching is good and some is very good. None is less than satisfactory. The teachers have high expectations of their pupils' learning. Their relationships with their classes are supportive yet firm and behaviour is good. The planning of the best lessons ensures that the activities extend the knowledge, understanding and skills of all of the pupils. The teachers are very good at drawing oral contributions from the pupils and enable them to use their knowledge and express their understanding. Regular homework is set and is used to reinforce and develop learning.

The work of the learning support tutors with pupils with special educational needs is very good and enables them to make good progress.

70. Pupils have individual laptop computers which are used to support their work in class. In a lesson on voltage, this helped the pupils to work on a wide variety of tasks at their own pace and enabled them to link their work in class with that at home. Some pupils, though, find it difficult to switch from focusing on their screens to listening to the teacher. The various uses of interactive whiteboards are being explored by the team of teachers. The team has not yet fully realised how to exploit the full potential of the ICT available to them, although there is already much good practice. The visual presentations of teachers in some lessons do not engage and interest the pupils enough, particularly those who are visual learners. A good range of extra-curricular activities make the subject yet more relevant and challenging for pupils. For example, the science club which is run by the laboratory technician has tackled more advanced practical experiments and brought in staff from a national telecommunications company to complement work on sound and communication. During the school's science week, pupils enjoyed the benefits of a mobile planetarium and an animal road show.
71. The assessment of pupils' work and its use to support their progress are very good. Marking is thorough; grades are given for effort and comments include advice about how to achieve higher standards. Assessment data are analysed well. The trends in the performance of individual pupils and of whole classes are electronically available to personal tutors and subject teachers so that they can take appropriate action to direct pupils where to improve. Particularly good practice is demonstrated when pupils assess their own progress and set their own targets for improvement.
72. The teachers and the technician manage themselves well as a team without a specified leader. Responsibilities are shared and decisions are made collectively. The area is well organised and functions smoothly. The assistant headteacher, who teaches some science, brings valued experience to this young and innovative team. There is a strong, shared commitment to improve provision further for all of the pupils.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- Pupils' research, especially using the Internet, is good.
- The department supports lower attaining pupils well with booklets that give good guidance for projects.
- Teachers and pupils use a wide range of non-graphical media.

Areas for improvement

- Standards in drawing and painting are too low, especially for pupils with high potential in the subject.
- Teachers' assessments of attainment, especially of drawing and painting, are not always accurate.
- Marking in sketchbooks does not inform pupils well enough how to attain higher standards.
- Pupils do not yet use their sketchbooks well enough.

73. Pupils' standards in art and design in both Year 7 and Year 8 match the expectations for their age groups. Pupils from all ethnic backgrounds make satisfactory progress throughout the school. Their best work is in using mixed three-dimensional media,

including textiles, rather than in drawing. They research topics very well, especially using the Internet, and this aspect of their work is above the standard usually found in Year 8. Pupils' drawing and painting are less well developed. Those of higher potential in the subject cannot use line, shape or tonal shading, to the level of competence to be expected in their drawing by Year 8. Pupils' painting is not developed enough, especially with watercolour. When pupils use other media, for example textiles or montage using a mix of media, their attainment is better and standards are average. Pupils have not developed the habit of using their sketchbooks well enough to provide a good record of their progress in art and design. Much work in sketchbooks is of a lower standard than pupils' loose work in folders. They lack practice to improve their basic skills through direct observational work, for example in drawing simple everyday objects.

74. The curriculum for Year 7 pupils includes lessons with subject specialist teachers, and also a session with their home tutor when they undertake research with their laptop computers. This work is useful and leads to pupils acquiring a better than average knowledge about topics such as Islamic art for their current project. This work also reinforces the ideas of linking learning from different disciplines together. Pupils' behaviour in all lessons is good. They show interest in a wide range of art styles and forms.
75. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and some lessons were well taught. The planning of lessons is secure and detailed with helpful liaison between specialists and home tutors in Year 7. The focus on skills other than drawing has given pupils confidence in the subject. The challenge now is to raise attainment in drawing and painting without undermining pupils' confidence. Pupils with special educational needs are well known and well supported by the department's learning support tutor who is a subject specialist. The needs of the likely high attainers, particularly potential fine-artists, are not yet similarly identified or met. Teachers' assessments of attainment do not always accurately reflect nationally expected standards, especially those of drawing and painting. Marking in sketchbooks does not identify short-term targets to enable pupils to improve their work well enough. Although pupils use computers very well for research, they do not yet use these creatively for artwork itself. Digital cameras and scanners that are held centrally in the school are not permanently located in the department. A program for image-manipulation has only very recently been acquired. Teachers reinforce literacy very well in their planning of lessons, but weaknesses in spelling and expression spoil standards in many sketchbooks. Aspects of numeracy, such as space and shape, are well integrated into the teaching. Teachers have made useful resource booklets for projects which support lower attaining pupils well.
76. Subject management is satisfactory. The school has made good arrangements for the subject manager to extend her knowledge and experience by working with older pupils in another school. Future curricular arrangements are, as yet, undecided. Resources are good. Shortcomings in library provision are compensated for through the very good access to ICT for all pupils.

CITIZENSHIP

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

Strengths

- Some very good teaching excites pupils' interest and involvement.
- The introduction of citizenship has been planned very well.
- The campus council is an effective means of involving pupils in the life of their school community.

Areas for improvement

- Pupils of potentially higher attainment are not stretched sufficiently to make the most of their potential for the subject.
- There are, as yet, no assessment procedures in place to measure attainment or to track progress.
- Development plans do not yet fully set out how pupils' needs will be met when the school accommodates them up to Year 11.

77. The standards attained by pupils in Year 8 are in line with those expected nationally. Pupils are achieving well, as most of them entered the school with very little knowledge of the subject. More girls than boys reach higher standards, but most pupils are making good progress. Most pupils have good general knowledge and were seen to apply this well in discussion on the topic of the public services. Pupils are often very articulate and reasoned in class discussion in small groups or with the whole class. In written assignments, pupils used the evidence drawn from published crime figures effectively in making judgements, although only the higher attaining pupils were sufficiently analytical.
78. The quality of teaching in lessons is mostly very good. Teachers have very secure subject knowledge and use a wide range of activities to challenge and stimulate the pupils. Pupils respond well because relationships with teachers are very good. As a result, their interest is aroused, they are fully engaged by their work and, consequently, they learn well. Teachers' expectations of pupils are high and they respond positively by working hard and sustaining a high level of concentration. However, although some extended written work is provided for higher attainers, more demanding tasks are needed to stretch these pupils to the full. Pupils work very well together in discussing current issues. In a Year 8 lesson, for example, they debated whether or not the National Health Service should treat patients who suffered from smoking related diseases. They listen to each other, and are enthusiastic in discussion. They are keen to present views from discussion in their small groups to the whole class. There is close collaboration between teachers and learning support tutors. As a result, the level of support given to pupils with special educational needs is very strong and accounts for their good progress. Pupils for whom English is not their first language are also well supported and almost half are achieving higher standards. In a minority of lessons, a handful of pupils whose attitude is hostile behave poorly and a disproportionate amount of time is spent on control of these pupils. As a result, the pace of working is slow, tasks are insufficiently varied and pupils do not achieve as well as they might. Teachers use homework effectively to extend and reinforce learning. For example, Year 8 pupils were required to do a piece of extended writing to explain to others of their own age group the problems faced by pensioners and why their needs justified a higher level of public expenditure. Teachers provide writing frames and starter phrases to extend pupils' literacy skills and to help them to write more coherently.

79. Leadership and management of citizenship are good. The subject is taught as a separate competence within the school's innovative curriculum. The programmes of study for it are comprehensive and detailed and meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. Although this has had a positive effect and reflects much careful planning, development plans are not yet prepared in a more detailed form for the 11 to 16 age range. There are currently no procedures for assessing pupils' work in the subject. Teaching is properly monitored through observation of lessons by senior staff and some observation by peers within the humanities department. Pupils are elected to a campus council, which makes a positive input into the broader aspects of the life of the school community. They actively participate in extra-curricular activities, such as debating competitions and environmental conferences, which further enhance their practical understanding of the subject.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- The enthusiasm and knowledge of teachers, technicians and learning support tutors are very good.
- Extra-curricular activities are well provided for.
- Pupils are very well trained in the use of hand and power tools.

Areas for improvement

- Work in food and textiles technology is underdeveloped.
- The work set for individual pupils and for groups is not challenging enough.
- Pupils' working drawings and plans are not well enough developed.

80. Pupils' attainment in Year 8 matches the standards expected nationally for pupils of this age group. Both girls and boys are confidently able to create design sketches electronically. They use a good range of technical words, practical skills and scientific ideas when making attractive working products. However, there are too few written reports of pupils' activities in designing and making textiles or food products. Pupils have not used or adapted their plans for mechanisms and control enough, and they do not sufficiently evaluate the sources of information that they have used. Therefore, the attainment of higher standards by pupils with much potential for the subject is not consistently being achieved. However, some Year 8 pupils won a national competition with electronically controlled mice last year; they are currently developing buggies for mini-robot wars as a valuable extra-curricular activity.
81. Pupils are achieving a satisfactory rate of progress overall. Some pupils make good progress in developing their written skills and competence with computers. Some average attainers do not attend to detail enough. For example, they do not include the numbers and the units on working drawings and, therefore, make these unusable. Even potentially higher attainers with well developed skills in extended writing get most of their information from the notes provided by the teacher. Pupils of lower attainment usually progress well with practical skills. Pupils who had little English on arrival at the school receive good support, and progress as well as others. Attitudes are often good; for example, pupils willingly moved aside to enable a wheelchair user to get a good view of the milling machine in action. However, some pupils often expect immediate, personal attention from the teacher.
82. The teaching overall is satisfactory and it has some good features. Both the teacher and the technician use their good subject knowledge and enthusiasm well, so that

pupils could list, for example, the advantages and disadvantages of automation. They guide pupils to use hand and power tools well. Their lists included social and economic factors as well as the quality of the product. Teachers' good techniques of questioning and cheerful demeanour encourage girls and boys to answer confidently and enthusiastically and reveal good speaking and listening skills. Homework was set regularly and accepted willingly by the pupils. However, planning of lessons and work did not provide pupils with tightly timed targets to meet, and they were often expected to progress at the same rate for too long. Some pupils did not know what to do next to improve and had to wait to be helped. Although the pupils made their own decisions in manufacturing tasks, their marked work lacked guidance from the teacher that required the pupils to take immediate attention to secure improvement.

83. The quality of accommodation and equipment is very good. The school has made a further appointment for the teaching of the subject. Although subject leadership and management responsibilities and priorities for development are not in place, the enthusiasm for the subject and determination of the teachers, technicians and learning support tutors to improve pupils' standards are unmistakable.

DRAMA

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

84. All pupils study drama in Years 7 and 8. The subject is also provided as an option for those who want to specialise further in it in Year 8. One Year 7 lesson was observed during the inspection, in which pupils prepared and performed an improvised role-play between customers and staff in a travel agency. Pupils' attainment is above that usually expected for pupils of this age. They speak clearly and confidently and many are able to adapt their speech to match the character that they are playing. Most are able to maintain their role well, even when they are not directly involved in dialogue. They are developing a good understanding of basic dramatic conventions, such as freeze frame, although their miming skills are less convincing. Very good teaching in this lesson enabled all pupils to develop their skills of performance and self-evaluation very well.
85. The co-ordinator for performing arts has established drama as an enjoyable subject for pupils and has produced a well-planned scheme of work. The subject also makes a valuable contribution to pupils' worthwhile experience through a drama club, which enables them to perform short sketches to parents each half term. Visiting theatre companies further extend pupils' experience of the subject, especially through their contribution to an optional course in Year 8. A specialist drama teacher is joining the staff next year and this is an important appointment for the future development of the subject.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- There is good and some very good teaching.
- The relationships between pupils and teachers are very good and assist learning.
- The subject is well led and managed.

Areas for improvement

- Pupils of high potential are not always challenged well enough.
- Pupils' progress towards their targets for improvement is not monitored closely enough.
- Teaching is not monitored closely enough for good practice to be easily shared by all teachers.
- Pupils do not yet have the opportunity for fieldwork.

86. In the work seen during the inspection, pupils' attainment in Years 7 and 8 conforms to the standard expected nationally. Pupils enter the school with geographical skills and knowledge close to those expected nationally and achieve satisfactory progress by Year 8. They have a sound knowledge of simple mapping skills and understand the ideas of scale and direction. They use four figure co-ordinates to locate symbols and features on an ordnance survey map successfully, but pupils of higher potential could do more. Most pupils, including lower attainers with special educational needs, competently locate continents, mountains, rivers and major countries and cities on maps. They know well the names of some features of rivers, and many have a good understanding of how erosion caused by rivers creates specific land forms. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the main influences on this country's weather. They have an improving awareness of environmental issues. They recognise that earthquakes result from movement of the plates that form the earth's crust, and understand well the reasons involved and the effects on people and the environment.
87. Numeracy successfully supports pupils' work. For example, they make use of data on rainfall and temperature in order to plot graphs successfully. Higher attaining pupils are able to evaluate and explain their graphs and compare and contrast differences. Most pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their investigative and analytical skills and are especially competent in the use of ICT to find information. However, the typing of lesson objectives into computers wasted time in one lesson seen. The absence of fieldwork restricts pupils' further progress in developing skills of investigation and analysis. Literacy skills are reasonably well developed through work in the subject. Most pupils have good speaking and listening skills that are supported by good opportunities for discussion. Key words are appropriately emphasised, and pupils' understanding and use of subject-specific vocabulary are good. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to write at length.
88. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall in both year groups. Most lessons were good and some were very good. Teachers plan lessons well and provide a good range of activities to stimulate pupils' interest and to ensure good learning. Very good relationships between pupils and teachers are helpful to the good progress that pupils make. In less successful lessons, pupils of potentially higher attainment were not stretched enough and the pace of learning was too slow. In these situations, text books and worksheets are used too much. However, in a very good Year 8 lesson on the costs and benefits of tourism in a developing country, the objectives for the lesson were made very clear to pupils at the beginning of the lesson. A very good range of activities and materials were used by the teacher. These included work for pupils to undertake in small groups, a good range of individual work and some vibrant question and answer work led by the teacher. This resulted in very good progress for pupils of all levels of competence. Assessment of work in geography is not yet supporting pupils' learning well enough because they are not consistently provided with direction on what they should do to help them to improve. They also lack sufficient knowledge of the National Curriculum levels that they reach in geography.
89. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The subject leader gives a clear focus to raising standards and the profile of the subject. The focus on specific

skills and competences has resulted in much more understanding by pupils of the importance of the subject. A good subject handbook and schemes of work provide generally good guidance to teachers, although the extension activities indicated are often not appropriate. There are developing procedures for the monitoring of teaching and learning, but opportunities for staff to share good practice are insufficient.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- Standards are above those usually expected for pupils in Years 7 and 8.
- The teaching is good and pupils learn well.
- The subject extends pupils' literacy skills very well.
- Leadership is very good and inspires enthusiastic teamwork.

Areas for improvement

- There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to visit sites of historical interest.
- The system to involve pupils more in assessment of their work is not yet in place.
- Assessment does not yet formally identify the most talented pupils in the subject.

90. Pupils are reaching standards above those usually found by this point in Year 8. Girls and boys from all ethnic backgrounds, including those whose first language is not English, are achieving well. Pupils with special educational needs are well known to their teachers who adapt work well to meet their differing needs and enable them to make good progress. The most talented pupils in the subject are not yet identified and, consequently, their needs are not fully met. Pupils gain the knowledge and understanding required by the National Curriculum study units well. For example, their written work on the Norman Conquest and that on the English Civil War revealed good understanding of these events. They understand what bias is, and write newspaper articles to argue a case from a particular point of view – for example, on English reactions to the Spanish Armada of 1588. Pupils interpreted the evidence available to them very well when making judgements on Mary I in some very good written work which is often wordprocessed and very well presented by pupils of all levels of competence.
91. Pupils attain standards of literacy in the subject above those usually found in Years 7 and 8. The most competent pupils write extended pieces of work with accurate expression and spelling. Average attainers also write imaginatively and at length. Lower attainers rely more on tabular and diagrammatic presentation of information, but they analyse the evidence before them well at their level. However, they do not write much at length. Pupils generally speak well and confidently in class and lessons are well planned for them to do so.
92. The teaching is good overall and enables pupils to learn well. Some teaching is very good. Two lessons in Year 7 were seen; none in Year 8 could be seen, but pupils' work in this year was sampled. The best teaching provides a very challenging learning experience for pupils. For example, a Year 7 lesson on the Hundred Years War required the pupils to research the causes of the war for themselves. They were not presented with the teacher's conclusions but they were expected to seek out the French and English points of view on the subject in work in small groups, and present this to the rest of the class. This method of working is effective in making each pupil an active learner, and the development of pupils' skills of literacy equips them to take on this role. However, guidance to focus the work done by pupils in small groups was not

sufficiently directed to enable them to make as much progress in the time available as they could. Teachers plan their lessons well by making clear at the beginning what is to be learned, so that teacher and pupils can share the same purpose. Computers are often used to supplement the resources available. Learning support tutors give assistance to individuals and small groups to help to maintain the impetus of learning. Teachers' marking of work is very good, especially in Year 8. Advice on how to improve is made clear to each individual and their standard, measured in National Curriculum levels, is given on their work. However, the assessment process planned to engage pupils further in their own assessment of their work is not yet in place. The good teaching that pupils receive enables them to learn well. They concentrate in class, show interest and respond very well to teachers.

93. The subject is very well led. The teachers work enthusiastically together as a team. Visits to sites of historical interest to extend further pupils' learning and interest in the subject are not yet provided.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) across the curriculum

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

Strengths

- The high level of ICT resources gives pupils scope to develop their skills and apply them widely.
- Teachers' subject expertise enables pupils to achieve very well and attain standards well ahead of those expected nationally.
- All teachers are finding ways to integrate ICT into subject work.
- Very good leadership and management have made ICT a key feature of pupils' learning.

Areas for improvement

- Development planning is too complex and lacks focus on priorities.
- Assessment procedures are not well enough established.

94. The standards of work of pupils in Year 8 are well above what might reasonably be expected at their age. Pupils from all ethnic backgrounds and with different levels of competence in the subject are achieving very well in only their second year of secondary education.

95. Pupils have very good keyboard skills. They enter data quickly and competently and compose text direct to screen. They are familiar with the main software applications, such as spreadsheets, wordprocessing and the use of databases; they move confidently and skilfully between them. Pupils use many enhancing features, which are evident in the quality of their work to be seen on display and in their folders. They are fully engaged by their assignments and work at them at a brisk and self-determined pace. They access Internet websites with ease for research and use the material that they find sensibly; they usually do not just copy it down. In a Year 7 art and design lesson, pupils who were preparing to design and make their own tiles accessed the websites of the Blue Mosque in Istanbul and the Alhambra in Granada to obtain examples of Islamic art forms, before researching them more generally with search engines. The material they obtained was used to create presentations using PowerPoint to explain their understanding of Islamic art to other pupils. In a mathematics lesson on planning a public survey, Year 8 pupils firstly accessed their individual assignments for the lesson, which had been e-mailed to them by the teacher, and then used the Internet to find data to help determine the questions they wanted to ask. In design and technology, pupils used 'crocodile clips' competently to design

electrical circuits; they devised a 'buggy' equipped with sensors in control technology and they have produced a maze game using a computer-controlled milling machine. Pupils use subject-specific software in French for conversational exercises, and in literacy to develop their understanding of Shakespearean text and the location of characters on stage. Higher attaining pupils in Year 8 have advanced skills, which enable them to extend their computer-aided design skills into a 'virtual world' situation. They have produced a plan of the school and added colours and textures for the walls and floors. Into this three-dimensional environment, they put characters representing themselves, who walk around their 'virtual school' and talk to each other.

96. The very good standards that they achieve by Year 8 are partly a result of the intense level of teaching provided in the first term of Year 7 and of the provision of a laptop computer for every pupil. However, such a high level of competence is also the result of consistently very good teaching. Only one lesson during the inspection that was specific to the subject of ICT was seen. This was of very good quality where Year 8 pupils worked with the teacher in an excellent learning partnership on virtual reality modelling. However, teachers enabled pupils to learn very well with ICT in many lessons seen in other subjects. Teachers' own competence with ICT and how it could assist pupils' learning was often exceptional. Lessons were very well planned to enable pupils to use computers for themselves as part of the process of learning. They regularly responded with enthusiasm to the opportunities to use computers to assist their learning of the subject. All pupils gained very well from the regular use of ICT, including those with learning difficulties and others for whom English is an additional language.
97. The leadership and management of ICT are very good. The newly appointed assistant headteacher with responsibility for the subject has very clear vision for the subject's future development and is planning the next stage of development very well. However, the current development plans are too complex and lack clear focus. Day-to-day assessment is good and encouraging to pupils but there is, as yet, no cross-curricular assessment to support and extend pupils' learning, to inform planning or to advise parents of their children's attainment and progress in the subject. ICT is fully integrated into the programmes of study of all subjects and all teachers have had sufficient training to enable them to support pupils' learning and use of ICT.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

Strengths

- Learning support tutors are used well to promote pupils' learning.
- The accommodation is very good and display is of good quality.
- The school has successfully made teaching appointments for June and for September to improve staffing.

Areas for improvement

- Pupils' skills of speaking and listening are below those expected for their age groups.
- Lack of permanent, qualified teachers, after a subject specialist left last year, has held back progress.
- Teaching is currently neither purposeful nor firm enough to sustain pupils' interest and concentration.
- The management of the subject lacks direction, particularly in planning and the scheme of work.

98. Since January 2003, the subject has undergone serious disruption of staffing which has affected standards adversely. French is taught in Year 8 by a qualified temporary teacher. The smaller numbers of pupils taking German in Year 8 and Spanish in Year 7 are currently supported by learning support tutors. Appointments have been made for June and September to improve this situation.
99. Standards in Year 8 are below those usually expected nationally for pupils of this age. Temporary staffing difficulties have adversely affected pupils' speaking skills, because they have not had the extensive and intensive language practice necessary. To a lesser extent, their listening skills have also been affected, because they do not hear enough of the foreign language spoken in the classroom. Their writing and reading skills are broadly satisfactory overall, because the current style of teaching concentrates more on these skills. Overall, pupils have not achieved as well as they should have done, particularly the potentially higher attainers and the most talented in the subject. The needs of pupils with special educational needs and of some lower attainers are also not met well enough, despite the additional support given by learning support tutors. Minority ethnic pupils and those with English as an additional language generally perform as well as others in their classes.
100. Overall, teaching in the department is unsatisfactory because of restricted lesson time available, the lack of specialist staff and inadequate planning. However, the quality of teaching in Year 8 was satisfactory in most of the lessons seen. A small number of higher attainers show evidence of past good teaching in individual conversations in French about themselves. The teaching of French in Year 7 is temporarily suspended for four weeks until June – because of the lack of staff – and none was seen. Arrangements have been made for these pupils to learn independently from a computer program.
101. In Year 8, pupils' learning is currently unsatisfactory. Pupils are in large groups of very varied competence in French. Teachers do not provide a wide enough range of materials to meet the needs of pupils' differing levels of ability, so that all pupils can make progress. Teachers do not always manage pupils firmly enough to sustain their interest, effort and concentration. Pupils enjoy using the computer program individually, but not all participate actively to the extent necessary to make good progress. Pupils worked well in two lessons seen where their standards were assessed by the teacher. They listened carefully and took the purpose of the lesson seriously. However, in general, teaching does not use the foreign language enough for pupils to make progress in practising and using the language themselves. Teachers do not follow an organised programme of planned language development. There are neither schemes of work to provide targets, nor planning to show how pupils of differing subject competence, especially the most talented and those with special educational needs, could reach such targets. A small group of Year 8 pupils learning German worked well, as a result of methodical and well-presented support teaching. These pupils made good progress in an interesting lesson on how to spend pocket money.
102. The leadership and management of the department are unsatisfactory. The department suffers from a lack of clear direction as there is currently no subject leader. There is no handbook or overall planning of courses and resources; the number of language lessons taught has temporarily been reduced. However, senior management has worked very hard to make appropriate appointments for June and September. The situation should improve.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- Good teaching leads to good learning and achievement.
- Very good resources, especially exceptional provision of ICT, and very good accommodation, support learning well.

Areas for improvement

- The most talented pupils are not formally identified and, therefore, their needs are not consistently met.
- Music making in small groups is not encouraged or developed enough.

103. There are no baseline data for music, but attainment on entry to the school as evaluated by the department, is judged to be generally below average. However, by Year 8, the musical attainment of girls and boys from all ethnic backgrounds and of all levels of subject competence is judged by the school to be at the level expected for this age group, and this represents good progress and achievement for these pupils. The work seen during the inspection near the end of Year 8 confirms that standards are at the expected level for pupils of this age. They know and understand basic musical notation and are able to play simple music from it. Compositions, created in small groups, show satisfactory planning, co-operative working, sensitivity to effects and the needs of the group. Pupils have many ideas to enhance their musical compositions. The properties of acoustic instruments are well understood. Knowledge of representative composers and styles are satisfactory. Provision for the use of ICT is excellent, although no use of it was observed during the inspection. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of musical vocabulary is satisfactory and written work is well presented.

104. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers' musical knowledge and understanding are very good. For example, a Year 7 group learned to play the right-hand part of Beethoven's 'Für Elise', and they were shown and encouraged to use a correct and efficient fingering which led to improved performances. The planning of lessons is very effective and provides for a good variety of activities. Methods of teaching are good and pupils are well managed. Teachers make satisfactory assessment of pupils' work. Pupils learn well. Their attitudes and behaviour are good in music. Pupils make good intellectual and creative efforts and there is good productivity in subject activities. For example, a Year 8 class working in small groups made good progress in developing their compositions based on the theme of 'moods and messages'. Pupils showed that they could work well independently, without constant direction and supervision from staff. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, especially from the very good support and assistance that they receive. These pupils are well involved in lessons. However, talented pupils are not identified and there is no sure way of knowing, therefore, whether their needs are met.

105. The department stages concerts at the end of terms on a regular basis, featuring the singing group and individual performers; these occasions are well supported and much appreciated. There are no instrumental ensembles at present. Twenty-two pupils, an average proportion, enhance their musical attainment with additional individual instrumental lessons.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Most teaching is good and some is very good where there are high levels of activity and a brisk pace is maintained.
- Teaching ensures a good balance between work in small groups, work with partners and whole-class activity.

Areas for improvement

- Pupils' critical evaluation of their own and others' performance is underdeveloped.
- Some girls have not developed throwing skills well enough.

106. Standards of work seen in Years 7 and 8 are generally in line with those expected for their age in athletics and in striking and fielding games. Overall, pupils of all ethnic backgrounds and levels of competence in the subject achieve well in Years 7 and 8. In striking and fielding games, most pupils throw and catch a hard ball successfully and confidently. While some pupils have developed impressive over-arm throwing actions, others, mainly girls, are at an early stage and have inappropriate patterns of movement with the incorrect combinations of arm and leg used together. In striking skills, the boys are more assured and many make consistently good contact with the ball. Many girls lack sufficiently early preparation for striking the ball and their follow through is not effective enough, both of which restrict their success. In athletics, girls and boys make good progress in developing sustained running and judgement of pace over specific periods of time. However, pupils' skills are underdeveloped in evaluating and being critically aware of their own and others' performance. Pupils with learning difficulties achieve well and make good progress. Pupils with a range of special educational needs can rarely be distinguished from others and many make good progress in practical work because of the good variety of tasks provided for them appropriate to their capacity. For example, a pupil with dyspraxia made good progress with catching skills. Some pupils develop and refine their skills in the structured extra-curricular programme.

107. Most teaching and learning are good and some are very good. Teachers know and care for the pupils and generally have high, but realistic, expectations of what they can achieve. There is a good balance of work with a partner, work in small groups and whole-class activity in most lessons. Teaching was especially effective where there was a prompt, active start to the lesson and a brisk pace maintained with a variety of challenging tasks undertaken. In a Year 7 athletics lesson, for example, pupils calculated how to complete a target number of laps in a given time, before setting out to achieve that target. Opportunities to explain and extend technical terms are taken up well, as in reference to muscle groups during warm-up and preparation for physical activity. However, there are missed opportunities to draw attention to the cause and effect that specific movements may result in. Consequently, pupils do not always observe movement accurately or evaluate their own or others' performance well enough.

108. Subject leadership is good. The curriculum is well planned with appropriate units of work which detail learning across the range of National Curriculum activities. The provision of sport as an option in Year 8 enriches the curriculum well, but requires more planning, organisation and appropriate staffing in order to make the best use of the curricular time available. Although the indoor accommodation is very good, the resources and provision for the teaching of gymnastics are restricted. The provision of the grass playing surface of the sports field is poor and, in their current condition, some

pitches and sections of the running track are unsafe and constitute hazards to the health and safety of pupils and staff.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Pupils and teachers have enthusiasm for the subject.
- The teaching is good and provides a wide range of learning activities.
- Pupils use ICT very confidently for research.

Areas for improvement

- The programmes of study for religious education are not well enough developed within provision for the humanities.
- Religious artefacts and textbooks are not used enough in lessons.
- Work is not yet monitored well enough to ensure consistently good standards.

109. Religious education is taught within a combined curriculum in humanities, where the components for geography and history are now firmly established. The religious education component is at an earlier stage of development, and the department has identified the need for a reshaping of the original programmes of study. Pupils in Year 7 are now following a revised course.

110. By Year 8, most girls and boys from all ethnic backgrounds and levels of competence in use of English are achieving satisfactorily. They are reaching the standards expected for pupils of their age, according to the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. They have a sound knowledge of the main beliefs and practices of Christianity and other major world religions such as Buddhism and Islam. They are also aware of how religious beliefs affect the lives of individuals and communities, for example in coming to terms with suffering, and caring for the environment. Pupils in Year 7 understand the significance of religious symbols and can design personal symbols to show their own beliefs. They are familiar with some of the key Islamic religious terminology. Pupils of all levels of attainment in both years work creatively in small groups to produce display materials, and are adept at using ICT for research.

111. Written work is in line with what is usually expected of pupils in Years 7 and 8. They usually record information neatly and attractively in a variety of ways, such as notes, spider diagrams, group-designed posters and factual descriptions. There are also examples of thoughtful, imaginative writing. Higher attaining pupils in Year 8 express themselves clearly, and have a good command of grammar, spelling and punctuation. Attainers of average competence use illustrations well to supplement their writing. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs make brief but relevant summaries of what they have learned, although some of their work is untidy and incomplete.

112. The teaching is good in both year groups. Pupils learn well because they are receptive and classroom relationships are very good. Although the teachers are non-specialists in the subject, they have a sound knowledge and enthusiasm for it that they pass on successfully to the pupils. Teachers sustain pupils' interest and concentration by a wide variety of carefully planned learning activities. Question and answer sessions enable pupils to check on their understanding of new information, and their speaking and literacy skills are developed well through group discussions, reading aloud and well chosen written tasks. However, an area for development is better use of resources to

support pupils' learning. Year 7 pupils were not guided well enough to access the textbooks and artefacts that are available. Consequently, for example, they gained less appreciation than they should have done of the spiritual importance of the intricate Islamic patterns adorning the pages of the Qu'ran, and how the Qu'ran is revered in the home.

113. The humanities department has made a satisfactory start in providing religious education for all pupils. However, the revision of the programmes of study for Years 7 to 9 is incomplete and the place of religious education in the provision for humanities is not yet, therefore, confirmed as it should be. Subsequent upon a successful outcome to this revision, monitoring of the subject across each year group to ensure consistency of standards will be possible and necessary.