

INSPECTION REPORT

THE LAMMAS SCHOOL

Leyton

LEA area: Waltham Forest

Unique reference number: 133287

Headteacher: Ms J Beaton

Reporting inspector: Mrs G Kayembe
2901

Dates of inspection: 7th – 10th October 2002

Inspection number: 249281

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
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	150 Seymour Road Leyton London
Postcode:	E10 7LX
Telephone number:	020 8988 5860
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr P Redcliffe
Date of previous inspection:	Newly opened school

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2901	G Kayembe	Registered inspector		<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>The school's results and pupils' achievements</p> <p>How well are pupils taught?</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p>
19322	J Bedawi	Lay inspector		<p>Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development</p> <p>How well does the school care for its pupils?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
20527	B King	Team inspector	Mathematics	
12191	C Moxley	Team inspector	English	
20832	M Galowalia	Team inspector	Science	
8672	M Roberts	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
31680	P Redican	Team inspector	Art and design Special educational needs	
12331	V Grigg	Team inspector	Design and technology	
16930	J Plumb	Team inspector	History Educational inclusion, including race equality English as an additional language	
15075	G Walsh-Nelissen	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
29510	N Mayfield	Team inspector	Music	
23030	C Runyard	Team inspector	Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
13734	H Davies	Team inspector	Geography Religious education	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is a newly built school funded through a private finance initiative (PFI). The contract with the PFI company who built the school includes provision of information and communication (ICT) equipment and resources as well as some support staff such as a facilities manager, site staff, midday supervisors and some technical and media resources staff. Catering services are also provided via this contract.

The school opened in September 2001 with only the new Year 7 intake on roll, and currently caters for 356 pupils in Years 7 and 8 aged between 11 and 13. It is expected to have an intake of about 900 pupils aged between 11 to 16 by September 2005. The pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds but, overall, social and economic backgrounds are considerably less favourable than national norms. The percentage of pupils eligible for a free school meal is well above average at about 42 per cent. Pupils come from a wide variety of racial backgrounds. About a third of pupils are of white-UK heritage. The main minority ethnic backgrounds include African, Caribbean, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Turkish. Many pupils have English as an additional language. Most are fluent in English and only a small proportion are beginners. There are very few pupils seeking asylum.

Despite some able pupils, the attainment on entry is very low and amongst the lowest when compared to other secondary schools locally. Aside from poor literacy and numeracy skills, many pupils have poorly developed personal and social skills when they begin school. Girls' attainment on entry is better than that of boys though still significantly below national norms. In addition, there is some evidence from data on entry to indicate that pupils of African, Caribbean and Turkish heritage start at the school with lower attainment than those of Asian and white-UK heritage. A large proportion of pupils, about 33 per cent, are identified as having special educational needs. This is above average. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs is well above average at 4.5 per cent. A high proportion of pupils with special educational needs have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The school is participating in the Excellence in Cities initiative (EiC) in conjunction with the local education authority. The EiC initiative is part of a national programme for raising attainment – in this case in city schools.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school where pupils make good progress overall and achieve well given their starting points. This has been as a result of good teaching and learning. The school has been in the unusual position of managing the growth and development of a brand new school whilst at the same time managing provision for existing pupils. For example, the number of teachers and pupils doubled at the start of this academic year. The first year, with only Year 7 pupils at the school, constrained some developments and there have been difficult choices in terms of the priority order in which provision for different groups is put in place. Whilst the school espouses strong values of inclusion, provision for pupils at the early stages of learning English and those with emotional and behavioural difficulties has not yet been sufficiently well developed to meet all their needs. As a result, these groups have not made as much overall progress as others. There is very good teamwork amongst staff and the headteacher provides a very clear direction for development. The headteacher sets a positive tone to the school ethos and pupils are happy and like coming to school. However, though many pupils behave well and are keen to learn, the overall behaviour is unsatisfactory and does detract at times from the quality of teaching and learning in lessons. On balance, though, the school

has made a good start and is providing good value for money though areas such as assessment and behaviour management need further development.

What the school does well

- Good teaching and learning lead to good gains in knowledge and skills for most pupils.
- Good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development results in a friendly atmosphere and a positive climate for learning.
- Good leadership with a very clear direction for development has secured very good teamwork amongst staff and a strong commitment to improving the educational outcomes for pupils.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about school. They are proud to be a 'Lammas School pupil' and, as a result, attendance is good.
- Provision for extra-curricular activities is very good.
- Accommodation is excellent.
- Support staff provide very good assistance to teachers and help them to focus their energies on teaching.

What could be improved

- Behaviour.
- Whole-school systems for tracking and monitoring progress and managing pupils' performance, and use of assessment information to improve education.
- Pupils' listening and writing skills and capacity to work on their own, especially in terms of using these skills to support learning in subjects of the curriculum.
- Provision for pupils at the early stages of learning English and for pupils with behavioural difficulties.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

This is the school's first inspection. Hence, it is not possible to comment on improvement. However, the school has reflected thoughtfully on its first year and put in train measures to address areas identified as needing further development. For example, access to specialist support for pupils with emotional and behavioural needs is beginning to be put in place. The school has appointed a specialist teacher for pupils who are learning English as an additional language and developments to meet their needs are being initiated. The school's capacity to develop and improve is good.

STANDARDS

Standards remain well below average by Year 8 but, nonetheless, show an improvement from their level of attainment at the start of Year 7. Girls make more progress than boys and this is especially noticeable in English and science. Overall, progress is good in English, art and design, design and technology, geography, history, ICT, music and modern foreign languages. It is very good in physical education and satisfactory in mathematics, science and religious education. Whilst in most subjects, standards are well below average by Year 8, they are closer to the nationally expected standards than when pupils started in Year 7. Attainment in design and technology, ICT and music is not as far below average as other subjects and, in physical education, standards are in line with national norms. There is some evidence to indicate that the gap in attainment on entry to the school, between pupils of African, Caribbean and Turkish heritage and those of Asian and white-UK pupils, persists. Overall, there is no significant difference in progress made by different groups. However, lack of comprehensive systems for data analysis and monitoring and tracking pupils' progress means that it is difficult to identify how widespread this difference is. There is an urgent need,

recognised by the school, to have such systems in place in order to make use of the data to help to narrow the gap in standards of different groups. The school is just beginning to set targets for attainment in tests that Year 8 pupils will take towards the end of Year 9.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Attitudes to school are largely good and pupils are enthusiastic and keen to come to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Though the majority of pupils behave well in lessons and around the school, a significant proportion of lessons are disrupted by poor behaviour from a minority. Overall, behaviour is unsatisfactory. Bullying, however, is not an issue. Where it does occur, it is dealt with quickly and effectively by staff.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory. However, a significant minority of pupils do not understand the impact of their behaviour on others. Some pupils find it very difficult to work collaboratively or share resources. In contrast, pupils from different ethnic groups mix well and take an interest in one another's racial and cultural backgrounds.
Attendance	Good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 8	Years 10 – 11
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 overall quality of teaching is good, especially the teaching seen by established staff. To a certain extent, newer staff are still developing relationships with pupils and honing their behaviour management skills, and this can affect their teaching. Teaching is good overall in English and satisfactory, though often good, in mathematics and science. Teaching is good in all other subjects except religious education where it is satisfactory. In subjects across the curriculum, good attention is paid to teaching subject vocabulary but there is more variation in the extent to which pupils are encouraged and supported to produce extended writing. Satisfactory attention is paid to using and extending numeracy skills in subjects.

Planning is meticulous and clear learning aims are identified and shared with pupils so that they know what they are expected to learn. The majority of lessons have a clear introduction followed by interesting and well-structured activities. Teachers are aware of the need for good structure in order to tackle the poor learning skills of many pupils. The round-up at the end of the lesson effectively focuses on the original aims to share with pupils what has been learned. Where teaching is good, pace is brisk, there is good use of questioning and pupils' work is well managed so that they are fully engaged, work hard and concentrate well. In these lessons, very good relationships have been established with pupils and the management of behaviour is skilled and efficient. Pupils' poor listening skills and, in a significant number of lessons, the poor behaviour of a minority, slow down the pace of teaching and learning in a minority of lessons. However, the overall good behaviour management skills of teachers usually ensure that teaching and learning remain at least satisfactory.

Whilst in many lessons, teachers plan work to match pupils' individual needs, this is not always the case. In a minority of lessons, not enough care is taken to plan for all ability groups in the class and this is made difficult by the very wide range of abilities in most lessons. Only in mathematics is it possible for classes to be organised on the basis of ability. There are currently not enough teachers in the school to allow other subjects to organise group by ability. Nonetheless, at times, able pupils and, at other times, lower attainers or those with special educational needs, are not provided with work that is suitable for their needs. Occasionally, work provided is not sufficiently interesting to engage pupils' interest. However, lessons are rarely less than satisfactory and this is a good achievement given the challenging nature of the intake.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	A well-balanced and broad curriculum is in place. The extra-curricular provision is very good. Teachers largely make good use of computers in their teaching, but some subjects do not make enough use of ICT, hence, legal requirements are not fully met. Nor are they met in religious education due to low teaching time. Enrichment and extra-curricular activities for gifted and talented pupils are good but, in lessons, they are not always challenged enough. Overall, provision is satisfactory.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory overall though there are aspects that are good. Specialist support is good and, when pupils are withdrawn for specialist lessons, the quality of teaching is good. Class teachers do not always provide effective support in lessons. Overall, though now improving, provision has been unsatisfactory for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Pupils who are fluent speakers of English make good progress. The small proportion who are beginners make varied progress with some achieving well. Overall, though, they have not made enough progress largely because not enough attention has been given to assessment of their needs and curricular support to meet these needs. These issues are now being tackled.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. There is very good provision for cultural development. Opportunities for spiritual and social development are good and satisfactory for moral. Events such as the talent show and the carnival are indicators of the high level of commitment of staff, who put enormous time and effort into these, and the high quality of provision.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There are good arrangements for child protection and satisfactory arrangements for health and safety. The school provides considerable personal care for pupils, however, assessment arrangements, particularly in terms of monitoring and tracking progress, are patchy and, at whole-school level, not well enough developed.

The school has effective links with parents. The headteacher has a very clear policy for developing and sustaining good links.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is well led by the headteacher and there is good delegation of responsibilities. Staff work very well as a team, and senior and middle managers provide effective support to the headteacher in leading and managing the school. The school development plan focuses well on priorities that are pertinent to the future development of the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are fully involved in the life of the school and largely carry out their roles effectively. However, a number of legal requirements are not met and, in this respect, governors are not meeting their responsibilities fully. They have a clear view of the kind of school they wish this to be and know its strengths and weaknesses well. There is a very good working partnership between staff and governors.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school have been largely informal and, to a certain extent, this has been appropriate given the size of the teaching staff. Though a system for the performance management of teachers is in place, the school is behind schedule in implementing it.
The strategic use of resources	Mostly good. Use of funds is carefully considered. The school has had to make some difficult choices such as another mathematics teacher versus a teacher for pupils learning English. Ultimately, the school needs to develop ways of evaluating the impact of spending decisions in order to ensure that the right choices have been made. The school pays sound attention to the principles of best value.

The availability of accommodation is excellent and resources very good. Staffing is good overall.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That children like school. • That the school has high expectations of pupils. • That the school is accessible and approachable. 	<p>The following concerns were raised by Year 8 parents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour, particularly in lessons. • Homework with many feeling that not enough was provided.

Parents' positive views are fully endorsed by the inspection. However, not all concerns are justified. Parents are correct to be concerned about the behaviour of Year 8 pupils, particularly in lessons. Some bad behaviour was seen in Year 7 lessons, but it is significantly better than in Year 8. Parents' views about homework are not correct overall. Inspection evidence shows that pupils receive regular homework of an appropriate level and amount. A few pupils do not know how to use homework planners. Some homework concerns were due to unavoidable use of regular supply cover for mathematics last year.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils begin school with very low standards of attainment overall. Skills in numeracy and written literacy in particular are very weak. The results of pupils currently in Year 8 in national tests for eleven-year-olds, which they took shortly before leaving primary school, were very low in mathematics and well below average in English and science. Standardised tests on entry give a similar picture of very low attainment for pupils currently in Year 8. The data from various tests indicates that there are few high attainers and very few with very high attainment when they begin secondary school education. Current Year 7 pupils performed better in the national tests for eleven-year-olds that they took in primary school than the Year 8 pupils. Nonetheless, their results were still well below average though a higher proportion demonstrated attainment above age-related expectations. It should be noted that in both year groups, the school does not have prior attainment data for a small but significant minority of pupils. When their prior attainment is considered, it further depresses the overall attainment on entry. Examination of pupils' written work shows that when they started, their level of knowledge and understanding in most subjects across the curriculum was very low. Girls begin with higher attainment than boys, and pupils from white-UK and Asian backgrounds tend to begin at the school with higher attainment than those from African, Caribbean and Turkish backgrounds. A number of reasons account for the differences: more of the African and Turkish pupils are likely to be at earlier stages of learning English than Asian pupils; whilst Caribbean pupils speak English fluently, they often speak a different variety of English to their teachers – in addition, they tend to write as they speak and hence produce written work which is not in standard English. The attainment on entry to the Lammas School is amongst the lowest when compared to all the other secondary schools in the borough.
2. Given these low starting points, the overall progress made by pupils is good. This has enabled the attainment of pupils in Year 8 to move forward from being very low to being well below average in the space of just over a year. There is some evidence, such as tests performed in science at the end of Year 7, to show that girls are making better progress than boys. There are differences also in the attainments of different ethnic groups. There is evidence to suggest that the attainment of pupils from African, Caribbean and Turkish backgrounds is lower than that of English and Asian pupils. However, evidence also points to Turkish pupils having made the greatest progress in mathematics. At this moment in time, the school has not carried out sufficient analysis of progress by gender or ethnicity to establish whether the attainment gap between different groups is becoming sufficiently narrower. Data analysis in the science department suggests that this is not the case in science.
3. In lesson observations, differences in standards of attainment between different minority ethnic groups have been less obvious in many subjects, but this partly reflects, for example, the relatively good oral skills that many African and Caribbean pupils demonstrate and which are not always reflected in the quality of their written work. The differences too can get masked by the generally good level of inclusion that teachers promote in their lessons.
4. Attainment in English, science and mathematics is well below average by Year 8. Pupils make good progress in English overall. In particular, they develop further their speaking and listening skills, though listening remains relatively weak. Many speak with good

levels of confidence and put forward their points of view effectively. Reading skills have improved well and, whilst there is some evidence of tangible improvement in writing, this remains the weakest area, particularly with respect to the use of literacy in subjects across the curriculum. Weaknesses in spelling, grammar and paragraphing are frequently apparent in written work. Nonetheless, in English lessons, use of well-crafted frameworks for writing and good focus on re-drafting have enabled pupils to develop a good sense of audience, to extend well their range of vocabulary and produce writing that is varied, interesting and imaginative.

5. Pupils make satisfactory progress in mathematics and science. Numeracy skills improve at a satisfactory rate as pupils move through Year 7 and they extend their knowledge of methods of solving mental arithmetic problems. The majority of pupils carry out simple arithmetic problems using addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. However, with more complex problems, they often need help. Skills in algebra are weak for many. Higher attaining pupils tend to have reasonably well-developed skills in solving problems and can usually interpret written problems by themselves. Pupils in Year 7 have started school with markedly better numeracy skills and are making good progress.
6. In science, pupils' skills in obtaining and presenting evidence and interpreting evidence are developing steadily but progress in other aspects of investigative science, such as planning experiments, developing hypotheses and explaining results, is slower. Girls tend to communicate their work better than boys. The development of knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas and principles is satisfactory. Able pupils effectively explain scientific phenomena. Lower attainers show developing knowledge of simple scientific facts and ideas. Overall, by Year 8, pupils' knowledge and understanding are better in relation to life and living processes and materials and their properties than in physical science.
7. In all other subjects, pupils make good progress, with the exception of religious education where progress is satisfactory, though standards remain well below average in most. In physical education, standards are in line with national expectations and pupils of African and Caribbean heritage perform particularly well. In design and technology, ICT and music, standards are below average. In the remaining subjects, they are well below. In music, many pupils sing well and this helps to lift the standards of their performance work. Work in musical composition is not at as high a level. Whilst pupils can make effective use of a variety of programs, their capacity to make independent use of computers to assist their learning is slower to develop.
8. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall and progress against targets in individual education plans is also satisfactory. Pupils with statements of special educational needs make good progress towards the targets set at annual reviews. In the smaller withdrawal groups, pupils' attitudes are good, and they make good gains in their reading and their study skills. For example, most pupils in these groups made good progress in their reading ages, making on average, one year's progress in just six months. They also learn to gain information from videotapes quickly and accurately, and this helps them to apply this skill in their other lessons. They make very good progress in physical education, because the planning is very good, and support assistants are very well informed about the pupils' needs. They make good progress in a number of subjects, including art and design, design and technology and English, where work is well adapted to their needs. However, pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties do not make enough progress in learning to control their behaviour, and this prevents them from making enough progress in their lessons. This

is because support and provision for these pupils have been inadequate and this is unsatisfactory.

9. Many pupils with English as an additional language, especially those who are fluent in English, achieve good standards measured against their prior attainment because they are well taught. Turkish pupils achieve well in mathematics. However, because there has not been a robust assessment to identify needs, some of these pupils appear to be placed in wrong sets and are not sufficiently challenged and so underachieve. There is evidence also to indicate that some at the early stages of learning English have made insufficient progress over their first year at school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Pupils enjoy coming to school and their attendance is good. They have satisfactory attitudes to learning. Their personal development and relationships are satisfactory, with strengths in the quality of relationships between pupils of different ethnic backgrounds. However, pupils' behaviour is unsatisfactory in lessons and adversely affects their learning and often the learning of others.
11. Pupils have satisfactory attitudes to learning. They enjoy learning, but often let themselves down by not listening or following teachers' instructions, or chattering whilst others speak. The latter is most evident at the start and end of lessons. This incapacity of pupils to be self-disciplined in lessons slows progress significantly, particularly when combined with less effective behaviour management strategies. Many pupils, including the higher attainers, show good interest and concentration and do their best to work. However, there are a significant minority of pupils with complex, challenging behaviours, predominately, but not exclusively, in Year 8, who still demand much attention. This impacts on the progress of other pupils who are motivated and keen to learn. In discussions, pupils felt that when work had been previously learnt, or the subject was boring, this caused behaviour to decline and so affected their learning. In the most successful lessons, pupils' concentration is good and there is strong interest in the topics being taught because behaviour management is consistent and activities are varied and not overlong. Pupils participate well in discussions, often responding with articulate and perceptive answers. In a Year 7 personal, social, health and citizenship education lesson, the whole class responded very well when discussing the impact of 'cussing'. One pupil was successfully motivated and challenged by the teacher's initial praise, and so worked hard throughout. Pupils are far less confident about, and willing to settle down to, writing. This feature is most evident amongst boys, including those of Black African and Black Caribbean heritage and pupils with English as an additional language, who often find spelling and sentence structure difficult. Nonetheless, when motivated by the topic, these pupils do become engrossed and often produce interesting work.
12. Pupils' behaviour is unsatisfactory because many pupils have not yet mastered very basic skills such as listening and following instructions, remembering to put hands up to answer or being quiet when the teachers or other pupils are talking. Pupils too often act without regard for others in class and do not behave with maturity. In addition, a significant minority of pupils have very challenging behaviour, often characterised by difficulty in building and maintaining relationships with other pupils or being able to work effectively in a group or classroom. However, it is important to note that the pupils with the most complex problems are not responsible for all the unsatisfactory and sometimes poor behaviour in the school. In over a quarter of lessons observed, the behaviour of pupils was unsatisfactory or poor. For Year 8 pupils, this was the case in nearly two-thirds of lessons. A very few pupils are starting to benefit from individual

counselling, but there are insufficient staff to provide specialist attention for all who need it, for instance to control anger or frustration.

13. Most pupils use their recreation time at break and lunchtime effectively, perhaps using the 'games room' or the 'computer club'. There is often a good atmosphere and most pupils are happily engaged in leisure activities that they clearly enjoy. They enjoy also the interactions with their friends and peers. However, a small minority, often but not exclusively boys, use their time to 'wind up' others, in corridors and in the playgrounds, often by 'cussing' that then might lead to fights, egged on by the audience that quickly gathers. The large site with many empty and open areas and numerous exits and entrance points has made it difficult for staff to contain pupils within an area that is supervised more manageably.
14. Pupils themselves feel that bullying is not of any significant concern and that it is dealt with effectively on the rare instances it does occur. The school deals with aggressive incidents through fixed-term exclusion that last year was high as the school tried to retain pupils with complex ongoing problems. There is now the realisation that in cases when all else has failed, permanent exclusion is the only option. This term, two pupils have been permanently excluded. Parents express concern about pupils' behaviour and inspection evidence confirms their views.
15. Pupils' personal development and relationships are satisfactory, with relationships across many ethnic groups being a significant strength. There is mostly good racial harmony between different cultural groups and faiths and racist incidents or discriminatory behaviours amongst pupils are not commonplace. Pupils feel that they can share and celebrate their ethnicity and different cultural heritages. This adds much to the school community. Girls and boys are at ease in each other's company; they will often choose to work in mixed groups. Pupils are polite and helpful towards visitors and are proud of their new school. However, a significant number of pupils are still developing their social skills and learning to be responsible towards each other. Some act and behave younger than their age, so that they don't always remember or bother to treat others well, causing upset feelings. The school has identified name-calling and poor language as a factor in limiting good relationships and behaviour; this is being addressed in formal lessons. Time for this vital input into pupils' personal development is limited because it is shared with religious education. Some tutor groups have only just had their first personal, social and health education lesson of this year. The majority of pupils enjoy their personal development lessons, but many are not yet able to link what they have learnt to other aspects of school life.
16. Opportunity for the development of pupil responsibility and initiative is satisfactory. Planned responsibility is offered through, for example, the school library monitors, the pupil reception desk and helping with office jobs, although some tasks, such as checking dinner registers, are inappropriate. The Year 8 council is established and works well, but is currently led by a member of staff. There are no pupil officers but there are plans to hand over the running of the council to pupils as they become confident and able to organise themselves. Pupils eagerly take on responsibility for organising agreed activities, currently, a school magazine, charity fundraising and considering rewards for achievement. The Year 7 council should be in place after Christmas. Individual pupils show good instances of initiative, for example by offering tea and coffee to the inspection team; there were many offers to act as school guides. There are though, no planned opportunities to develop initiative, or opportunities to enhance self-esteem and social skills through residential visits.

17. Attendance is good and better than in most secondary comprehensive schools, nationally. Pupils are keen to come and enjoy the facilities their new school offers. A number of pupils are late, but have to provide reasons and are expected to improve; most do because they do not like having 'late detentions'.
18. Though there is much further work to be done, especially with Year 8 pupils, in relation to the development of their personal and social skills and, in particular, with their behaviour, there has been an improvement in all these aspects since the school opened. Pupils have made progress in their personal development and have a better understanding of what is expected of their behaviour.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. In nearly two-thirds of lessons, the quality of teaching is good or better and, in about a fifth, it is very good or excellent. Teaching is better in Year 7 than in Year 8 and this is largely linked to the better behaviour of Year 7 pupils. Often pace and coverage of content are adversely affected in Year 8 lessons and, to a more limited extent, in Year 7 lessons, by the poor behaviour and concentration of a minority. Good teaching and particularly good management of pupils ensure that even where pupils' behaviour is bad, the overall quality of teaching and learning are at least satisfactory. Teaching is rarely less than satisfactory and, in the instances when this has been the case, contributory factors have been weaker management of pupils, slow pace and insufficient match of work to pupils' needs combined with pupils' poor learning skills. Overall, however, the quality of teaching is making a difference to most pupils' progress and steadily raising their levels of attainment.
20. Teaching is good in most subjects and at least satisfactory in all. It is often very good in physical education where inspirational teaching coupled with excellent management of pupils promotes a very good learning environment. Teaching in English is good overall and it is satisfactory in mathematics and science though much good teaching is also evident in these subjects. The quality of teaching in religious education is satisfactory overall and sometimes good. In art and design, design and technology, geography, history, ICT, music and modern foreign languages, teaching is good, making an effective contribution to pupils' learning.
21. Teachers have good subject knowledge which they use effectively to help plan lessons and systematically build subject knowledge and skills. Lessons generally have very clear aims that are shared with the pupils and the quality of planning on the whole is good in terms of structure of the lessons, varied activities and planned use of resources. The extent to which lessons meet individual pupils' needs is satisfactory overall, though better in some lessons than others. There is a wide range of abilities in classes. The school has not been able to make extensive enough use of setting by ability as there are not enough teachers in each subject to enable them to do so except in mathematics. Hence, match of work to pupils' needs is not always sharp enough to meet all needs. In some subjects, this affects lower attainers more and, in others, it is higher attainers who are not stretched enough, as in religious education and science. To some extent, teachers are unable to match work to the needs of pupils at the early stages of learning English as an additional language because they do not have sufficient data and information on their needs. In physical education and modern foreign languages, however, teachers are very skilled in matching work to individual needs and this very effectively engages the interest of pupils and helps all to learn at a uniformly good pace.

22. In most lessons, the pace of teaching and learning is good and there is good focus on the development of basic subject skills. Pupils' skills in literacy, especially in relation to writing and numeracy, are often poor. These are often satisfactorily addressed; however, there is a need for more coherent focus on developing pupils' skills in writing. Weaknesses in writing too often hinder pupils' progress across the curriculum. Another negative factor in teaching and learning is the poor level of concentration and the application to work of a substantial minority of pupils. Many pupils lack the initiative to work on their own and are often too dependent on their teachers. In the best lessons, teachers use a very good range of methods and provide varied and interesting tasks that the majority of pupils are able to get on and do by themselves. The good behaviour management skills of many teachers help to keep pupils on task in most lessons and to maintain a reasonable, if not good, atmosphere for learning. Giving pupils timed activities so that they know how long they have to finish each one, organising seating arrangements, targeting all pupils when asking questions, not just the ones with their hands up, and calling upon recognised sanctions swiftly when pupils do not co-operate are all very effective tactics in dealing with pupils who have less mature attitudes to learning and who find it difficult to concentrate and to motivate themselves.
23. In the majority of lessons, good use is made of questioning to help draw out pupils' learning and extend their thinking. This was particularly noticeable in design and technology. Well-developed and creative activities also provide good learning opportunities for pupils. In modern foreign languages, for example, the use of a range of rapidly paced, short activities keeps pupils engaged and interested.
24. In the third or so of lessons that are satisfactory, often the lesson has been well planned but the teacher becomes side-tracked in dealing with behaviour issues and does not deliver it all. Pace of teaching and learning in these lessons is slowed down as a result. Nonetheless, given the extent of poor and difficult behaviour, even in these cases, the teachers have done well to manage pupils sufficiently to ensure that learning has been satisfactory. Sometimes, there is too much teacher input or whole- class teaching, and too little pupil involvement in some of the satisfactory lessons also results in some pupils losing interest.
25. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall. Learning support assistants provide help and useful advice for these pupils in lessons. Relationships between staff and pupils are good, and this helps maintain positive attitudes in their lessons in the learning support department. Individual education plans are used to set targets and to give teachers useful advice. Strengths of the teaching include the calm and purposeful atmosphere created by the teacher, which helps focus pupils' attention on the lesson and promotes good levels of engagement. Lessons are also well planned and tasks are broken up into short, interesting sections. This produces a good pace as pupils move from one task to the next. For example, in a lesson on silent letters, pupils made words up using prepared cards, wrote the words out in their workbooks and then played word games. As a result, pupils tried hard to succeed, the pace was good and good learning was the result. However, in some subjects, teaching is not always well enough matched to each individual pupil's attainment. In addition, in a few lessons, teachers find it difficult to manage the behaviour of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. At times, their behaviour also disrupts the learning of other pupils in the same class. These factors produce unsatisfactory learning in a small number of lessons. Liaison and joint planning of lessons between subject teachers and learning support staff are not consistent. They are very good in physical education and good in English, where teachers and support assistants work well as a team. However, in some subjects, including mathematics and science, the planning is not adapted sharply enough to the needs of the subject and the

individual education plans are not useful enough. This means that learning of pupils with special educational needs is no better than satisfactory in these subjects.

26. Some departments do not know who the pupils learning English as an additional language are and so cannot plan to meet their needs. This is an unsatisfactory situation and results in unsatisfactory support being provided in lessons. A significant number of pupils who are beginners in English have been identified as having special educational needs on the basis of a reading test administered last year by the learning support department. The use of such a test is inappropriate for pupils who are still learning English. The newly appointed teacher with responsibility for pupils with English as an additional language is working hard to change this and so ensure that pupils with English language learning needs receive the best possible quality of teaching.
27. Pupils regularly receive homework of good quality. The quantity of homework is also good. Pupils themselves feel that they are given enough homework.

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

28. The breadth and balance of subjects taught are good and the quality of the curriculum for individual subjects is generally good though the overall curricular provision is satisfactory. In addition to the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education, pupils study drama and personal and social education and this gives added breadth to the curricular provision. Good breadth of provision is also secured through individual subjects such as art and design which includes teaching of textiles. Pupils in Year 8 are given the opportunity to study Spanish as a second language. Citizenship skills are effectively taught through subjects such as history, geography and religious education.
29. Time allocations are largely well balanced. An appropriately high proportion of time is spent on English in Year 7 to give additional support for speaking and listening skills. ICT also receives a good time allocation. However, the time devoted to religious education is not presently sufficient to teach the agreed syllabus to the required depth. The arrangement of teaching in a three-week cycle alternating with personal and social education is having a negative influence on the pupils' learning. Time for science is also less than recommended nationally and, though planning indicates that this will be made up in Year 9, the amount current Year 7 pupils receive is low given their low attainment on entry. In other words, they could benefit from more time at an early stage to help develop a secure grounding in basic scientific skills.
30. The National Curriculum requirements to teach ICT across the curriculum are not fully met though many subjects make good use of computers in lessons. At present, design and technology and music are not in a position to teach National Curriculum requirements fully because they do not have the necessary equipment to teach control systems or ICT skills respectively. Not enough use is made of computers by pupils in mathematics, art and design and modern foreign languages also.
31. The school has worked hard to put schemes of work in place and, whilst developing the Years 7 and 8 curriculum, much thought is being given to Year 9 and attention is beginning to be focused on Key Stage 4. The curriculum plan for Year 9 includes a higher time allocation for science.
32. The school has identified a group of pupils who require additional support for literacy and have appropriately chosen to teach this when the rest of the year group are learning

Spanish. Pupils are taught in mixed ability groups for all subjects except mathematics. Here, pupils are broadly banded into top, middle and low groups and this is having a positive impact on their learning. Mixed ability teaching in other subjects is a pragmatic choice and not necessarily the preferred method of organisation in all subjects. Until the school has sufficient numbers of teachers, subjects will not be able to have the luxury to choose between mixed ability and classes grouped by ability. This places constraints on the effectiveness of the school in meeting a very wide range of needs.

33. The school has identified the need to address the underachievement of certain ethnic groups and has appointed a specialist to draw up strategies to counteract this trend. A draft learning support policy is currently being finalised. Two classes of pupils have been selected for additional support and the local education authority has recently been proactive in supporting the school in developing improved behavioural strategies. However, until recently, the school has had no access to a learning support unit and has bought in a limited amount of specialist support for behavioural needs.
34. Curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall and is a balance of strengths and weaknesses. Most pupils with special educational needs have reasonably good access to the curriculum offered by the school. They are usually taught effectively with their peers for the great majority of the time though match of work to their needs is not always effective in lessons. Small withdrawal groups and some one-to-one tuition are used well to adapt the curriculum where necessary for those with moderate learning difficulties. Good use is made of ICT to support and extend pupils' learning. For example, pupils learn to draft and redraft personal statements using computers. In addition, some pupils use laptop computers to help develop their note-taking skills. Provision for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties, however, is not well enough adapted to their particular needs, and their engagement with their lessons is not good enough.
35. Another strength is the range and quality of extra-curricular activities that the school provides for its pupils. In the current term, there are teams and clubs for football, basketball and netball. There is a good fixture list with other schools and the pupils had considerable success last year in cricket and athletics. The first ski trip abroad is currently being organised. In music, there are clubs for keyboard, singing and percussion. Science provides opportunities for pupils to have extra help with homework and practical investigations. Pupils can also learn about different cooking styles from countries such as Mexico. A games room is open every day and there are many opportunities for pupils to further their ICT skills either by booking their own time or joining the club. Art and design and technology woodwork also allow pupils to further their interests. Overall, provision of extra-curricular opportunities is very good.
36. The school's provision for personal and social education is satisfactory with a number of good features. There is a strong commitment to developing pupils' social skills and promoting self-esteem in line with the school's aims and values and this is evident both in the personal and social education programme and the day-to-day interactions of pupils with all staff as well as through the themes addressed in assemblies and tutor periods. Personal and social education also makes an important contribution to developing key skills of working together and positive communication. The developing scheme of work is already highlighting the need for study skills but has yet to map out a careers programme. Further training for the teachers of this subject is required to ensure familiarisation with the content of the schemes and consistency of teaching. All aspects of citizenship are planned to be taught across a range of subjects but, as yet, there are no plans to monitor the pupils' progress or gains in knowledge.

37. The school has already developed a good partnership with the community and these links have a positive impact on the pupils' personal development. The school carnival involved local people, largely those of African or Caribbean origin, in the design of costumes, running of stalls and the provision of food. Links with Leyton Orient Football Club provide opportunities for girls and boys to improve their football skills. Parents of considerable athletic achievement help to run athletic clubs. The adult education and a local church group use the school facilities and pupils are able to attend the Borough's Music Service for Schools which is also resident at the school. There have been local visitors in subjects such as art and design and design and technology and an architect has visited to discuss environmental issues. The community policeman and a local health and safety officer have discussed topics linked to the personal and social programme. As yet, there are no links with other religions, such as visits to mosques or synagogues.
38. The school put a lot of thought into the transition from primary school into Year 7, especially for the first intake to the new school. All pupils and Year 6 teachers were interviewed and great care was taken over the balance of teaching groups. Pupils value the fact that they were involved in the choosing of the name for the school. They also felt that pre-visits to the school to see the site and meet the teachers greatly eased their transition and alleviated worries. Subject links between departments and primary schools are not fully developed and are seen as an area to improve. There are good links in ICT with classes of primary pupils visiting the school to use their facilities. There are positive links with beacon schools in the borough. For example, there are links between the departments in science, art and design, modern foreign languages and music. Year 11 pupils from another school mentor the Year 8 pupils of this school. They are having a positive impact as role models although, currently, only girls are involved.
39. The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of the pupils is good and this aspect of the school's life has been planned. There is good provision for the spiritual education of pupils. There is good provision for pupils to reflect on their personal experiences and those of others in religious education, music, physical education and modern foreign languages, and in the faiths of others in religious education. There are good opportunities for pupils to express their spirituality through involvement in assemblies and tutor group registrations and through weekly and daily themes such as black history. However, the school does not fulfil the requirement for a daily act of collective worship.
40. The school makes satisfactory provision for moral education. Teachers provide strong role models in their relationships with, and management of, pupils. In religious education, pupils discuss moral values and, in physical education, the values of respect and sharing are strongly emphasised. Good behaviour is praised during registration.
41. The quality of social education of pupils is good. Pupils have several opportunities to take responsibility through daily duty in the reception area and involvement in the school council. The personal, social and health education curriculum and registration time provide good opportunities for pupils to discuss strategies for dealing with bullying. In several subjects, such as geography, religious education and music, pupils learn through group work. Older pupils visit the school to work as peer mentors, and the school's own peer mentors are being trained.
42. Cultural provision is a strength of the school. There is a good range of activities that allow pupils to explore their own cultures and the different cultures of the world. These include a Mexican cookery club, carnival, the talent show, African drumming and a workshop on Caribbean poetry. Assemblies raise the cultural awareness of pupils

through performances by school groups. In several areas, such as art and design, design and technology and music, pupils are given good opportunities to work with visiting artists and study designs from other cultures and world music.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

43. Staff provide pupils with caring pastoral support, utilising the well-established teacher/pupil relationships. Monitoring of pupils' personal development is satisfactory. At departmental level, there is sound monitoring of academic performance but, at whole-school level, this is underdeveloped. Educational and personal support and guidance for pupils are satisfactory. The procedures for monitoring pupils' behaviour are good but the extent to which sanctions act as a deterrent is limited and the school is aware of the need for more stringent measures to be taken. Procedures for preventing oppressive behaviours such as bullying or racism are sound. The provision for pupils with a statement of special educational needs is satisfactory. Attendance monitoring is good. Arrangements for child protection are good and arrangements for health and safety are satisfactory.
44. Procedures for assessment of pupils' academic progress are satisfactory but the use of assessment to improve the curriculum and better meet pupils' academic needs is underdeveloped. In addition, though procedures for monitoring and tracking academic development are good in subjects, whole-school systems have yet to be established. In almost all subjects, procedures for assessing pupils' academic development are satisfactory and, in many, they are good or very good. However, use of assessment to inform planning is more varied with a number of subjects making insufficient use to support and develop pupils' learning. These subjects include science, art and design, design and technology, ICT and music. In contrast, there is good or very good practice in geography, history and modern foreign languages. In almost all subjects, monitoring of pupils' academic progress is at least satisfactory and often good. Subjects use strategies such as regular tests, marking of books and ongoing assessment in lessons to identify how well pupils are getting on. Assessment is linked closely to National Curriculum criteria. In a number of subjects, qualitative targets are set and shared with individual pupils along with useful advice on how work can be improved. Though information given to pupils about how they could improve their work broadly reflects the National Curriculum requirements, pupils are, as part of school policy, not told their levels. There is scope for the school to improve the mechanisms by which pupils are given clear, pupil-friendly written notes on the National Curriculum criteria for the level they are working at currently and the next level. For example, pupils do not have a sheet at the front of each exercise book or in their homework planners with such criteria. Current assessment practices are not providing pupils with as much information as they need to help them to know how to improve their work so it will impact on raising academic standards.
45. The key weakness in assessment and monitoring of academic progress is the lack of whole-school systems to monitor the data and information collected. Most of the data collected, and this includes results of standardised tests on entry and of National Curriculum tests taken at the age of eleven (though the quality of some of this is variable), has been entered into an ICT system but, as yet, no analysis has been produced to monitor pupils' attainment and progress by ethnicity, gender or any other grouping. This is unsatisfactory. Individual subject heads identify, through their own individualised systems, pupils who are doing well and those who may not be achieving as well as they should, for instance that boys do not do so well in writing, and some minority ethnic groups are not attaining as well as others in science. However, there is no way of knowing if a pupil is underachieving across a range of subjects or of

comparing an individual pupil's performance across subjects. The school is aware of the need to develop whole-school systems and this is an area that has been prioritised in the school improvement plan.

46. Staff are using the data on entry to set formal targets for end of Year 9 assessments and national tests. They are rightly not using this data to set targets for GCSE as these targets would inevitably have to be very low given the attainment on entry. The senior staff want to ensure that challenging targets are set, and met, for national tests at the age of 14 and that on the basis of this performance, GCSE targets will be set in order to push for higher attainment.
47. Marking is varied, though satisfactory overall. In some subjects, marking is very good with precise, positive comments that help pupils to improve, but there is also some work that is unmarked, just ticked, or errors highlighted without providing suggestions for improvement.
48. Annual reviews of statements for pupils with special educational needs are carried out efficiently and meet statutory requirements. Teachers, learning support assistants, parents and pupils are involved in these reviews, and attendance by parents is good. Procedures for testing and recording progress are thorough and systematic. Pupils are set targets for improvement, which are regularly reviewed and involve the pupils themselves in the process. The school also makes good use of the services of outside agencies, for example the psychological service. Procedures for identifying pupils with special educational needs are thorough, and clear individual educational programmes are written for pupils on the register. However, they are not adapted well enough to the demands of each subject, particularly in mathematics and science.
49. There is as yet no whole-school strategy for monitoring the achievement of minority ethnic pupils. There is good practice in the humanities faculty which could be used as a model for the whole school. There is rigorous monitoring of minority ethnic achievement. Effective use is made of baseline data to set targets for minority ethnic pupils and their progress is monitored against their targets. In science, there is monitoring of minority ethnic achievement but not enough use is made of data to raise standards for these pupils.
50. In the last academic year, pupils at the early stages of learning English as an additional language were screened using a reading test. This is insufficiently robust to identify needs and inform planning. There are now robust demarcation/identification criteria to assess need but the assessment has not been carried out. There is some evidence of pupils being wrongly placed. For example, a pupil with English as an additional language positioned in the lowest mathematics set was found to be underachieving as the work given was not challenging enough. In addition, there has been insufficient consideration given by the school to review the special educational needs register against the mapping of languages.
51. The monitoring of behaviour, and procedures and provision for eliminating oppressive behaviours are satisfactory. The school has appropriate behaviour and anti-bullying policies with clear expectations and procedures, giving detail about sanctions but less on reward. Racism of any kind is not tolerated. There are good procedures for monitoring and dealing with any racist or sexist behaviour, or behaviour which shows prejudiced attitudes towards others. Exclusion records are well maintained. Staff know the pupils who are at risk of exclusion and appropriate pastoral support plans are in place. Bullying is not considered an issue by pupils or parents. Pupils and staff are aware of the steps taken to monitor behaviour. Pupils know the detention system and

understand the reasons for being placed 'on report'; they get their report slips signed at the end of lessons. The system works effectively for most pupils and less severe behaviour problems improve. However, the provision for improving and resolving more challenging and entrenched behaviour patterns is unsatisfactory. Pupils who have chronic difficulties in controlling anger and frustration, or who react to taunts and name calling, often fight or act in other anti-social ways. School strategies are ineffective in resolving these incidents. Detentions and fixed-term exclusion have not always worked, with a considerable proportion of excluded pupils being excluded more than once. A tiny handful of pupils with extreme personal and behavioural problems are starting to respond through good one-to-one counselling by a part-time member of staff. This provision is insufficient to deal with the considerable number of pupils with extreme problems that impact on learning and on the school ethos. There are not enough staff employed to provide focused specialist attention to support these most challenging pupils. The school has limited anger management counselling or access to relevant support. The local education authority behaviour support team, which has recently been put in place, is soon to be involved for the first time. Staff have received 'in-house' training but have not been able to benefit from the knowledge of external behaviour management or counselling specialists. There is an appropriate policy for physical restraint. The school feels that the very recent institution of a pupil referral unit in the locality provides greater opportunities for dealing with the most challenging behaviours by, for example, being able to give 'time-out' to individuals who have been repeatedly excluded on a temporary basis but to no avail.

52. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. The staff know pupils well through the good induction programme. Heads of year will remain with pupils throughout the school. Form tutors have positive relationships with families and remain in contact. Parents appreciate this. Pupils feel they can approach staff easily for guidance, and they know they will be heard. However, time for formal personal, social and health education lessons is limited by being shared with religious education so the current provision is insufficient for the many pupils who are still developing their basic skills and learning how to work together. Pupil reports provide satisfactory personal development targets but opportunities for pupil self-assessment are underdeveloped.
53. The monitoring of attendance is good. The school has very effective procedures for lateness and quickly contacts parents about non-explained absence. Truancy is rare as subject registers are taken promptly and absence from lessons followed up. Registers do not meet requirements; marks are missed, entries are made in pencil and daily totals and records of authorised and unauthorised absence are not completed.
54. Awareness of child protection is good. There are two trained designated staff, and other staff have done training. Local education authority procedure is known and followed. Any sensitive records are kept separately with restricted access. Pupils in public care have the required plans. No pupils are currently on the 'at risk' register, but the school does monitor any initial concerns, seeking advice from other agencies when needed.
55. Arrangements for health and safety are satisfactory. Records need to contain all the information required in school policy, such as records of fire drills.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

56. The school has established a good partnership with its parents and carers. Parents hold good views of the school and are supportive of its aims. The quality of information parents receive is satisfactory. Parents are interested in their children's education and make a good contribution to their learning.
57. The school works hard to secure parental involvement and has a good level of success. Parents of all backgrounds and cultures feel that they can approach and work with the school to jointly support the pupils. During the inspection, a good many parents came to see staff to make enquiries and received a warm and friendly welcome. Form tutors have developed a positive relationship with parents and are happy to help when they can. The prompt 'first call' system for absences has raised parental awareness about good attendance. Parents have expressed a desire to set up a parent teacher association. The school is keen to involve parents in its daily life and has plans to invite parents to become part of its whole-school reading scheme on Fridays.
58. The quality of information provided to parents is satisfactory. The termly newsletter contains much useful information. The school's first annual governors' meeting for parents will be in November. The prospectus does not fully meet requirements because absence figures are not included. Pupil annual reports are satisfactory. All subjects are reported and there are useful comments on pupils' personal progress. However, in a few subjects, targets are not precise enough and have insufficient academic content. For example, in ICT, 'Familiarise with the same enthusiasm new software, yet to be introduced', is unclear and difficult to understand. Space is not provided for pupil and parental comment. Nonetheless, parents appreciate the arrangements to discuss their children's progress. Information about academic progress measured against National Curriculum levels and targets is not provided.
59. The learning support department works closely with parents, who are provided with sound information about their children's needs and progress. Parental attendance at the annual reviews of statemented pupils is good as a result.
60. Parental contribution to learning is good. Attendance at induction meetings and those linked to pupils' learning and school events, such as the talent show and the vibrant, multicultural carnival, are good. Most parents support the school's homework policy and comment regularly in the very useful home/school diaries. A number of parents expressed concern about the amount and provision of homework but inspectors found that homework is firmly established with clear guidance for pupils and for parents to enable them to support their children at home.
61. Parents have good opinions about the school overall, apart from their justified concern about behaviour and some concerns about homework which inspection evidence did not substantiate. Parents know that their children are enjoying school and that staff are friendly and ready to listen.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

62. The overall quality of leadership and management within the school is good. Given that the school is a new school, it is coping well with the constraints that have been placed on the school as a result of building up from the bottom. For example, the current lack of flexibility in grouping of pupils has led to widespread mixed-ability teaching. Though this needs further refinement, for most pupils and lessons, the work provided meets existing needs.

63. The headteacher provides good leadership in the current context and is well respected by staff, governors and parents. She has set a very clear direction for the development of the school, and the priorities identified in the school development plan are pertinent to the school's needs for future development. There is very good understanding amongst staff and governors, and indeed parents, as to the key aims of the school and they share common purposes and values.
64. Effective management strategies are in place to enable staff to carry out concurrently the dual tasks of managing growth and maintaining educational provision for existing pupils. Senior staff and middle managers, such as heads of department and heads of year, provide good leadership and management within their own areas of responsibility. They are highly professional and competent practitioners who have a clear idea of how they wish to develop and improve their areas both in terms of the existing provision and future needs. The headteacher has been very ably supported by the longer standing deputy headteacher, who was appointed shortly after her, and before the school officially opened. Another deputy headteacher has been recently appointed and is settling well into her new role and already providing effective support.
65. There is good delegation of work to senior and middle managers and the teamwork across the school is a very strong feature of its success. Already, after only one year's operation as a school, it has gained the Investor in People award. This is also a mark of the high quality of professional development offered to staff. There have been regular training opportunities and whole-school professional development activities have focused well on school needs. New staff and newly qualified teachers are provided with suitable, good quality support and induction.
66. There is a clear line management system in place as well as systems for performance management. However, ongoing monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning have been largely informal. To a certain extent, heads of department, in most cases, have not had anyone to monitor. Nonetheless, much sharing of teaching and learning practice has been gained through team teaching or when teachers have been supporting others. Members of the senior management team are visible around the school and any issues in terms of performance are picked up and supported. However, the school is behind schedule in terms of meeting national requirements for teacher appraisal. In addition, systematic monitoring of homework, marking etc. have not been carried out and these are now a priority for development. Whilst there has been some work carried out in putting in place systems for tracking pupils via data analysis, this is currently not well enough developed for the school to monitor pupils' ongoing performance. Some departments, such as English, science and humanities, have produced useful analyses of pupils' performance, but this is by no means widespread and each has used a different system of pupil performance monitoring. The school has set up a working group to explore data analysis and pupil performance management systems in order to recommend systems for whole-school use. Currently, the lack of such systems means that the school cannot easily track gender differences or differences in performance by ethnicity. Given that certain minority ethnic groups are performing less well than others, it is important for this area to be developed further.
67. Governors fulfil their roles reasonably well, though an area for development is to ensure that the school meets all statutory requirements. A temporary governing body was formed before the school opened and now a permanent one is in place and many of the temporary governors have remained as serving governors, thus helping with continuity in their roles. There is a good balance of professional expertise and representation of parents on the governing body. Governors have provided much valuable support to the

school and the headteacher. They are kept very well informed about the work of the school and have a clear idea of the school's strengths and the areas which continue to need development. There is a very good working partnership between governors and school staff, especially senior staff who have the greatest contact with governors. Governors also have good involvement with finances, oversight of the PFI contract, budget setting and monitoring of finances. They are clear about what sort of school they want this to be and, to a certain extent, leave this to the headteacher to establish and develop. Appropriate committees have been formed which enable governors to monitor the school's work and to provide support and a sounding board for new ideas or proposals. Governors are developing their links with individual areas of the school. For example, there is as yet no system for linking each governor to a subject area though there is a governor for special educational needs. A number of statutory requirements are not met and, in this respect, the governors do not fully meet their responsibilities.

68. The learning support department is well managed and is developing its strategies to meet the needs of the large numbers of pupils with special educational needs. The new Code of Practice is in place, and the procedures are fully understood and followed well. The school meets the requirements of the Disability Act 2001, and there is good access to all areas of the building for pupils with physical disabilities. Support staff have clearly defined areas of responsibility and are well deployed, with due regard to their qualifications and experience. Staffing, accommodation and other resources are adequate for the needs of most pupils, but there is not enough effective support for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties.
69. Financial management on the whole is good and the school has carefully considered its needs and fully consulted governors when taking financial decisions. The large under spend last year was a result of not knowing the cost of the PFI contract and, therefore, the school over budgeted for it. It is still not clear to the school what the budget implications are for next year in terms of paying for the PFI contract. This is an unsatisfactory situation. On the positive side, the PFI contract is well managed by the school and there is a good working relationship with a number of support staff who are provided by the contract to work in the school. There is very good liaison with the facilities manager, appointed through PFI, who manages these staff and the school site.
70. There are some very good aspects to strategic planning and thinking. Appointment of new staff has been a massive task for the school. For example, between the end of the first year and the start of the second, the teaching staff doubled in order to meet the needs of pupils. There has been very good planning for recruitment and selection of staff and this shows in the overall high, professional quality of all staff, and teaching staff in particular. Though the school was provided with generous start-up funds, these have not been unlimited and senior staff and governors have had to make some difficult choices in relation to staffing and use of funds. The headteacher has often been astute in anticipating difficulties or needs and planning for them; inevitably, however, given the unusual situation of this school, some unforeseen issues have arisen. For example, it became very clear shortly after the school opened that mathematics could not be taught in mixed-ability sets. EMAG funds were used to appoint another mathematics teacher to enable some form of grouping by ability. However, the school found it difficult to recruit and was left in a situation where a series of supply teachers covered the vacancy for much of last year. In addition, the school was without a teacher for pupils with English as an additional language. It had been anticipated that the high level of in-class support would cater for their needs and that the capacity for setting in mathematics would address needs of minority ethnic pupils, which it seems to have done to a certain extent. The school needs now to monitor the impact of spending decisions such as this in terms of improvement in pupils' learning and achievement. There has been a lack of

strategic direction and planning for pupils with English as an additional language. The recent appointment of a teacher for pupils with English as an additional language looks promising but, understandably, the development plan for improving the provision for these pupils is at an embryonic stage.

71. The school has made a good start overall. A very positive tone has been set, and this is principally through the informed leadership of the headteacher. There is a high level of inclusivity within the school, even though some specific groups (pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties and pupils with English as an additional language) have not had their needs fully met during the first year of existence of the school. Through the generally high level of staffing, most pupils have had considerably more individual attention than they might have had in an already established school. The school has also worked very hard to hang onto its most difficult pupils although there is a recognition now that harsher measures may need to be taken where pupils do not respond effectively enough to the chances they have been given to change their behaviour and attitudes. The inclusivity of the school shows particularly in the involvement of large numbers of pupils in the school carnival and the talent contest.
72. As befits a newly created school, resources are very good. There are considerable reprographic facilities, extensive computer equipment and a fine library environment. Much equipment is funded and serviced through the PFI initiative, and a very favourable replacement programme is in place. Library stock is being built up annually, and includes talking books and dual language texts, but few CD-Roms as yet; the library mezzanine area currently houses 31 computers, all used well by pupils, especially at lunchtimes. Classrooms are well equipped (some currently not yet in full use), and lockers are provided for all pupils. However, in design and technology, certain incomplete equipment has created difficulties and, in both music and religious education, further resources are desirable. As the school roll grows, the current library space may prove insufficient, and movement along corridors may become an issue.
73. Staffing is good. There are well-qualified teachers with a wide range of experience and, overall, there is a good balance between staff with much teaching experience and those newer to teaching. Support staff, such as learning support assistants, administrative staff and technicians, provide very good support to the teaching staff. This enables the school to run smoothly.
74. The building is excellent. It is kept in very clean order. Any rubbish is picked up quickly. The school hall is commodious. The dining hall, though adequate now, is unlikely to meet the future needs when the school has its full intake. The gymnasium is well equipped. It is multi-purpose. For example, it provides facilities for gymnastics, tennis, badminton and basketball. There are very good facilities for disabled pupils. In case of emergencies, such as fire, a special lift continues to work, a separate power generator operating it. All stairs have a refuge point and an emergency wheelchair. There are height adjustable sink units. The building offers several purpose-built facilities. For example, there is a fitness suite, a recording room, a photography room, a drama hall, well-equipped food technology rooms, laboratories and a lockable, fenced kiln. The library is too small to accommodate pupils when the school reaches its full intake in three years time. There are not enough green fields for play. There is not enough storage facility for the design and technology department. Display facilities in classrooms are insufficient, for example teachers cannot display key words. This limits pupils' access to the curriculum.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

75. In order to improve the standards of education currently being provided, the headteacher, senior managers and governors should:

(1) Improve behaviour by:

- (a) putting in place appropriate provision for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties, such as specialised support for anger management;
- (b) gaining access to a learning support unit for pupils in need of specialist support;
- (c) establishing a more effective balance between consequences of bad behaviour and understanding and tolerance of it; and
- (d) supporting staff who may need further professional development in managing behaviour in lessons.

(Paragraphs: 8, 10, 12-14, 19, 24, 25, 33, 34, 43, 51, 90, 112, 116, 120, 144)

(2) Put in place whole-school systems for assessment and for tracking and monitoring progress and using the findings in order to improve attainment, particularly in terms of closing the gap between boys and girls and different minority ethnic groups by:

- (a) developing a whole-school ICT based system which staff can access;
- (b) analysing pupils' performance by gender and ethnicity;
- (c) ensuring that pupils who are learning English as an additional language are assessed effectively using appropriate assessment techniques;
- (d) making use of the data to inform curricular planning and provision in all subjects and at whole-school level;
- (e) using the line management structure to monitor and support departments in terms of their assessment procedures and use of assessment;
- (f) ensuring that books are well marked and pupils are aware of how to improve their work; and
- (g) putting in place in all subjects effective systems for pupils to be aware of the expectations of work as they relate to relevant National Curriculum levels.

(Paragraphs: 1, 2, 43-45, 47, 49, 66, 92, 99, 103, 109, 113, 122, 138, 142)

(3) Develop pupils' skills in listening, writing and in being able to work on their own by:

- (a) providing pupils with well-structured opportunities to develop their writing skills across all subjects;
- (b) developing whole-school strategies to improve pupils' listening skills;
- (c) making effective use of ICT in lessons and particularly in subjects where computers are not being used to help develop pupils' skills in independent learning;
- (d) making sure that work in lessons matches the needs of all pupils;
- (e) making greater use of setting by ability as the school grows and there is greater flexibility in the way that staff can be deployed and the curriculum modelled; and
- (f) building on the best teaching practice in the school to provide pupils with opportunities to work on tasks and to limit the extent of whole-class teaching or teacher domination in lessons.

(Paragraphs: 1, 3, 4, 7, 19, 21, 22, 30, 76, 77, 84, 96, 98, 100, 109, 112, 116, 123, 126, 132, 138, 139, 144, 145)

- (4) Improve provision for pupils with English as an additional language by:
- (a) ensuring that they are correctly assessed and identified;
 - (b) making sure that all staff are aware of who these pupils are and what their needs are;
 - (c) developing effective strategies for in-class support; and
 - (d) ensuring that work in lessons is planned to meet the needs of pupils at the early stages of learning English.

(Paragraphs: 9, 26, 50, 117)

In addition to the key issues above, also tackle the minor issues:

1. Increase the time for religious education. (Paragraphs: 29, 146)
2. Ensure that music and design and technology have sufficient computer equipment/resources to meet requirements of the National Curriculum. (Paragraphs: 30, 72, 138)
3. Ensure that the performance management cycle is fully implemented. (Paragraph: 66)
4. Meet requirements for information in the school prospectus. (Paragraph: 58)
5. Help to develop a parent teacher association. (Paragraph: 57)
6. Draw demarcation lines around equipment in design and technology workshops. (Paragraph: 109)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	81
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	35

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	14	35	27	1	1	0
Percentage	4	17	43	33	1	1	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	356
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	152

Special educational needs

	Y7 - Y8
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	13
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	116

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	149

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.8
National comparative data	8.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4
National comparative data	1.1

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

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
112	11	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	3	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
10	0	0
39	0	0
12	0	0
0	1	0
92	21	0
37	6	0
33	0	0
0	0	0
24	2	0
0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 - Y8

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	27.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	13

Education support staff: Y7 - Y8

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	311

Deployment of teachers Y7 - Y8

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	70
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Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	908,703
Total expenditure	759,222
Expenditure per pupil	4,314
Balance brought forward from previous year	N/A

Average teaching group size: Y7 - Y8

Key Stage 3	18.4
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Balance carried forward to next year	149,480
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	26.4

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	360
Number of questionnaires returned	61

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	62	31	3	2	2
My child is making good progress in school.	43	31	3	0	23
Behaviour in the school is good.	39	36	7	2	16
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	41	30	7	3	20
The teaching is good.	49	30	0	2	20
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	34	34	5	3	23
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61	23	5	0	11
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	72	18	3	0	7
The school works closely with parents.	51	26	2	0	21
The school is well led and managed.	52	16	2	2	28
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	46	28	0	2	25
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	46	25	0	2	28

Other issues raised by parents

At the meeting with parents, many voiced concerns about the behaviour of pupils in the school.

The high proportion of 'don't knows' that have been ticked for most of the statements in the questionnaire is due to the fact that when the questionnaire was sent out, the current Year 7 pupils had been at the school for only a few days. As a result, their parent(s) often felt unable to comment.

The picture of parental views is clearer when the responses of parents of Year 8 pupils and those of Year 7 are taken separately. These are recorded in the following tables. Not all parents put the age of their

child on the questionnaire so the total of Year 7 and Year 8 responses below is lower than the total questionnaires returned by parents.

Questionnaires returned by parents of Year 7 pupils

Number returned: 28

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	29	0	0	4
My child is making good progress in school.	46	21	0	0	32
Behaviour in the school is good.	36	36	0	0	29
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	50	18	0	0	32
The teaching is good.	46	25	0	0	29
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	21	39	0	0	39
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	54	25	0	0	21
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	71	21	0	0	7
The school works closely with parents.	32	29	0	0	39
The school is well led and managed.	46	18	0	0	36
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	39	25	0	0	36
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	46	18	0	0	36

Questionnaires returned by parents of Year 8 pupils

Number returned: 22

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	59	36	0	5	59
My child is making good progress in school.	41	45	9	0	41
Behaviour in the school is good.	45	41	9	5	45
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	41	14	9	36
The teaching is good.	59	36	0	5	59
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	59	23	9	9	59
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	68	23	5	0	68
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	77	14	9	0	77
The school works closely with parents.	73	23	5	0	73
The school is well led and managed.	64	14	5	5	64
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	64	23	0	5	64
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	45	36	0	5	45

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

ENGLISH

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

Strengths

- Teaching is good, with very good management of behaviour.
- Pupils make good improvements in writing over time.
- The leadership and teamwork of the department are strong.

Area for improvement

For the department:

- The department development plan needs to be prioritised.

For the whole school:

- Standards in writing across the curriculum need to be improved.

76. Pupils enter the school with attainment that is far below the national level in English. Although by Year 8 they are still well below average overall, pupils have reached a below average level in speaking and writing. Their listening skills are well below average overall. Girls attain significantly higher than boys in listening and writing but boys demonstrate better speaking skills than girls.
77. Pupils make good progress, with significant gains in writing by Year 8, though overall standards remain below average. There is some very wide attainment in writing with some able pupils producing high quality, imaginative and fluent writing, and lower attainers finding it difficult to write coherently and express simple ideas clearly. There is equal variation in spelling with many pupils still spelling words as they say them. Overall, though, a positive feature of pupils' work is that they are imaginative in their thinking and come up with interesting and varied ideas for writing. Pupils' listening to short instructions is much improved, and their reading of prescribed texts is satisfactory. The department has not yet set timed examinations, hence it is difficult to assess how well pupils perform when working entirely on their own.
78. Pupils at the early stage of learning English make satisfactory progress in developing skills in English language. They are taught phonic strategies effectively and this leads to improvement in their spelling of frequently used words. Satisfactory use is made of structured worksheets to develop written literacy.
79. Individual education plans are used well to support the learning of pupils with special educational needs and they make good progress over time.
80. The quality of teaching and learning is good. All the teaching seen during the inspection was at least good, with some of it very good and excellent. Lessons move at a lively pace. Teachers use a range of activities, with short, rapid tasks to maintain pupils' attention. They manage behaviour extremely well, keeping individuals on task with a look or a gesture, by altering their tone of voice and with frequent use of pupils' names to praise or alert them. All teachers in the department have a strong voice and the determination to ensure that learning takes place. Pupils learn effectively because lesson objectives are clearly outlined and frequently referred to. They use their individual

whiteboards well to show factual understanding of grammar and to write exploratory pieces. This results in commendable extended writing done over time. Pupils listen very well to short, concise instructions, but concentrate less well when required to listen for longer. They speak with confidence and in standard English when required. Pupils of African and Caribbean heritage have relatively good oral skills though this is not always reflected in their written work.

81. Although girls continue to achieve more highly than boys, there is no difference between the achievement of different ethnic groups. Pupils draft their work well, all using wordprocessing and some using desktop publishing. Overall, computers are effectively used in teaching. Written work is marked helpfully, building on the school marking system with the department's own incentives. Pupils are not yet told how their work relates to national levels. Schemes of work have been devised to suit the cultural background and interest of the pupils and revised in the light of initial implementation. Pupils wrote imaginatively in response to the novel 'Underground to Canada', they reflected thoughtfully about Greek myths and legends from India and Nigeria. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported through the use of extra writing frames to help them form and develop their ideas. They were seen making good progress when studying texts about crocodiles. The more able pupils are sometimes set extension work.
82. The department is well led and managed. Assessment procedures are good and used soundly to help improve provision. Pupils' performances are effectively analysed and tracked in order to plan for future teaching. Schemes of work are fully linked to the new framework for teaching English, which is being implemented consistently and thoroughly.
83. The provision for drama is good. There is purposeful work in lessons, with good co-operative skills being developed early in Year 7. Pupils quickly develop good performance skills. All those in Year 7 had the opportunity of a theatre visit last year which, for many, was their first time to do so.
84. Use of literacy is satisfactory overall in the curriculum. Pupils speak confidently in lessons and other situations. They spoke well in the school council and gave articulate responses when asked to describe its working. Their listening is variable; it is good when the teacher draws the class to full attention but often concentration wanders if pupils are expected to listen for any length of time. Standards of writing are well below average. There is good provision for extended writing in English, art and design, music and history, but more opportunities are needed in other subjects such as design and technology, geography, science and religious education. The learning of key words is well promoted in most subjects, with attractive displays using ICT and modern foreign languages, but the spelling of those words is not always reinforced. Reading aloud was seen in English and ICT but is not a notable feature across the school.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- Good leadership with very good documentation.
- Committed staff with good expectations of pupils.
- Well-equipped suite of rooms.

Areas for improvement

- Ensure pupils complete work assignments and correct errors.
- Develop strategies to improve overall class behaviour.
- Develop individual target setting using assessment data.
- Enhance the use of ICT in the subject.

85. National tests administered at the end of Year 6 show that the attainment in mathematics of pupils entering Year 7 in 2001 to be the lowest in the borough; fewer than 50 per cent obtaining Level 4 or better in the subject. By Year 8, standards had steadily improved, though there are still many pupils achieving at Level 3 or even Level 2. The progress of Asian and white-UK pupils was satisfactory, that of Turkish pupils was particularly good, but pupils of African-Caribbean heritage lagged behind. Over the year, girls made slightly more progress than boys.
86. Preliminary data for the 2002 Year 7 cohort suggests that nearer 60 per cent had attained Level 4 or better on intake.
87. Decisions were taken during autumn 2001 to split classes into ability sets, and appoint an additional mathematics teacher. Unfortunately, a suitable full-time appointment could not be made and a succession of supply staff was needed. Pupil learning was affected accordingly. The department is now fully staffed, classes being paired then split into three sets based upon prior attainment.
88. Very detailed lesson plans have been drafted for the teaching of mathematics in each of Years 7 and 8, indicating suitable resources, starter activities, topic material, homework ideas, links with other subjects and suggestions where ICT may be used. Overhead projectors and whiteboards are extensively used, rooms contain good displays of work and catch-up or transition material is available to assist learning as is extension material for the higher attaining pupils.
89. Teaching in lessons observed was satisfactory overall, and it was often good. On very rare occasions, teaching was unsatisfactory. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and pupils receive much encouragement, including beyond lessons. There was careful planning, with reinforcement material presented immediately to pupils, linked to prior work and as a springboard for lesson development. Of particular effect was lessons that proceeded at pace with pupils being challenged to achieve and where misunderstandings were spotted and corrected at frequent intervals. When starter activities dragged on for too long, worksheets were insufficiently matched to individual needs or, where errors were not picked up, pupils became restless, behaviour deteriorated and this impacted adversely on both teaching and learning, as in one unsatisfactory Year 8 lesson.
90. There is a rich social mix of gender and ethnic groups within classes, fully integrated and inclusive, and pupils collaborate well in discussion or investigative work. Learning varied from good or satisfactory in most lessons to poor where behavioural distractions slowed progress. Where learning was good, as seen in several Years 7 and 8 lessons, clearly focused activities and written work demonstrated achievement. Most pupils were sensible and sought to proceed with their work, though even some higher attaining pupils had short attention and concentration spans. Some classes contained pupils whose poor listening skills and distracting behaviour led to little or no progress being made, an issue that needs addressing more firmly. More explicit exemplar solutions would assist all pupils, particularly lower attainers who need clearer guidance on how to set out answers. Pupils with special educational needs make moderate progress; their attainment will improve when specific numeracy/mathematics individual education plans

are implemented. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress and play a full part in lessons. A learning support teacher assists in all lessons for the lower attaining sets.

91. Both classwork and homework exercises are well marked, often with supporting comment. Scrutiny of work shows little evidence of pupils doing corrections or completing unfinished work; a major bar to progress because learning is impaired. This is a key issue for the department to address. It is also contributory to the poor achievement made in lessons by, notably but not exclusively, a number of Afro-Caribbean boys and girls whose behaviour deteriorates. There are useful examples of pupils' work using ICT, such as a fraction wall, spreadsheet work, charts and survey work produced by using computers. However, not enough use is yet made of ICT in mathematics and, to fully meet National Curriculum requirements, this provision needs review.
92. Considerable assessment data has been produced by the department, covering standards prior to entry into the school, internal results and progress indicators, including by gender and ethnicity. Analysis of the data is at an early stage and has yet to be shared appropriately with the pupils, particularly in the form of target setting, and for monitoring progress. Whilst pupils are issued with self-assessment cards associated with topics studied, these are often incomplete or not filled in at all. This was a consequence of the use of supply teachers last year.
93. The department is very well led, with clear ideas for the future, and has committed and able staff. Documentation is of very high quality. Based on the first year's experience, there is now good opportunity for further growth and development.

Numeracy

94. Numeracy standards on intake suggest the new Year 7 to have greater skills than the previous intake. Information available for both Year 7 and Year 8 enables focused work with individuals to be undertaken through classroom activities, targeted support sessions at lunchtime and use of computer software. Pupils have a good grasp of basic number properties, though multiplication by two-digit numbers or with decimals is weak, as is division. Operations with negative numbers are satisfactory and pupils understand sequences. They can, with help, find the areas and perimeters of simple shapes, substitute data into a formula and determine simple probabilities.
95. Discussions between heads of departments helped prioritise numeracy lesson topics and a numeracy steering group has been set up. Given the overall low attainment level, there is satisfactory work in design and technology on measuring and weighing, in geography in the use of graphs, scales and simple co-ordinates and, in art and design and science, though presentation of material needs improvement.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- Leadership and management of the subject are good.
- Teachers have secure subject knowledge and are committed to improving standards.
- Pupils' knowledge of some aspects of science is good.
- The senior technician provides very good support to teachers.

Areas for improvement

- Standards of attainment are well below average.
- The use of assessment information to better match work to pupils' needs, set targets and inform curricular planning requires further development.
- Time for teaching science in Year 7 is too low.
- Pupils' behaviour and motivation are not always satisfactory.

96. Pupils' results on entry to the school, last year, were well below average. By Year 8, standards remain well below average. Pupils make satisfactory progress, though girls in Year 8 have made more progress than the boys. This happens mainly because girls apply themselves better in lessons and on homework tasks than boys. Evidence from assessment data indicates that some minority ethnic groups attain higher standards than others though progress for different groups is similar. Standards in Year 7 are below average and better than those in Year 8. Their standards on entry were relatively better. As a year group, they make better learners than Year 8. Both boys and girls in Year 7 make similar progress. Pupils with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language also make satisfactory progress. Higher attaining pupils, including gifted and talented pupils, do not make as much progress as they should because teachers do not always challenge them enough.
97. Pupils' standards are relatively better in life processes and living things and in materials and their properties. For example, they know the main parts of the male and female reproductive organs and their functions. Higher attaining pupils have better understanding of human growth patterns. Average and lower attaining pupils are less clear about parts of plant and animal cells and what is different between these cells. Pupils are showing increasing knowledge of arrangements of particles in solids, liquids and gases. They explain how particles of these substances are affected by heat, including melting of solids. Most pupils know how to make pure salt from rock salt. Standards in investigative work and physical processes have not progressed as much as they should, mainly because not enough time is allocated to science in Year 7. Pupils' skills in obtaining and presenting evidence and interpreting evidence are developing steadily. Girls communicate their work better than boys.
98. Teaching ranged from satisfactory to very good and was satisfactory overall though half the teaching seen was good or better. Pupils' learning reflects the quality of teaching. There is good emphasis on learning collaboratively. Teachers' secure subject knowledge is reflected in the clarity with which they explain scientific ideas and processes. In one lesson, the teacher achieved very good learning by providing a very well-structured and organised lesson. Pupils in groups of two or three were given key terms such as 'planning', 'predicting and observing' and 'measuring'. They were also given several statements of scientific processes. They were asked to match these terms with correct statements. Pupils were allowed to give printed information but not allowed to ask for it from their neighbouring table. The activity induced high motivation and promoted scientific literacy and thinking. After the target time, pupils from each table were asked to explain what scientific processes each key term specified. Sharing this information with the whole class attended to pupils' misconceptions. Teacher support for pupils for whom English is an additional language and learning support for a pupil with a statement of special educational needs promoted good learning in line with the rest of the class. Very effective management of pupils developed learning at a very productive pace. The teacher made effective use of a computer and interactive board to display results of pupils' pulse rates. A few pupils who did not pay enough attention were not able to take their pulse accurately. In several lessons, pupils' inappropriate behaviour, poor listening skills and lack of concentration reduced effectiveness of learning in some classes. Matching tasks to pupils' diverse needs in mixed-ability

classes is a common weakness in lessons that are satisfactory, but is effective where teaching is good or better. Occasionally, weakness in management of pupils and not making best use of resources, such as models, slowed down learning. Marking is satisfactory overall but does not always give pupils enough guidance on how to improve. Clear learning targets/lesson objectives are not always recorded in books, as they should be, for each lesson to give pupils a clear direction on what to learn.

99. Leadership and management of the subject are good because there is a clear direction for development, a strong commitment to improve pupils' standards of work and the head of department leads by example. There is good monitoring of pupils' progress and good support for the new teacher in the department. Resources and staff are overall well managed. Much effort has gone into establishing the department in this new school and much good work has been achieved in putting in place a relevant curriculum and effective procedures for assessment. However, to a certain extent, the department is in a difficult position with respect to meeting the wide range of needs of pupils in a mixed-ability learning environment as there is currently insufficient staffing to group pupils by ability as happens in most other schools. Whilst in good or better lessons, there is an effective match of work to differing needs, this is not universally the case. Hence, not all pupils' needs are fully met. Assessment procedures are well developed, as is the analysis of results to monitor pupils' progress. However, the information is not yet used to maximise learning of different groups of pupils. Target setting and pupils' self-assessment are developing steadily to improve standards. The teachers receive very good technical support. The quality of resources is good and satisfactory use is made of ICT. There is a good range of extra-curricular activity organised by the head of department and this helps to promote science and to support pupils' wider learning about the subject. The accommodation is very good and provides a very good environment for learning.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- Teaching and learning are good, and pupils achieve well as a result.
- There is an active approach to using materials in the best lessons.
- Work in batik is lively and expressive.
- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development.

Areas for improvement

- Pupils' lack confidence in drawing, especially when working from observation.
- There is not enough use of ICT to support and extend pupils' work.
- Assessment procedures do not give pupils a clear idea of how well they are doing.

100. By Year 8, standards of work are better than when pupils started though they are still well below average. Pupils learn to use a good range of materials and processes in two- and three-dimensions. Their work in batik shows an increasing ability to use fluid lines and bright colours, and portraits in this medium are lively and expressive. Their ceramic pieces are well made and carefully decorated, using designs informed by the study of Egyptian art. Collage work in tissue paper is also bright and bold. However, pupils' drawing skills are weak, especially when working from observation, and they lack the confidence to record what they see carefully and accurately. Painting by middle and low attaining pupils lacks finesse, and paint is applied rather crudely to the picture surface. In addition, there is not enough use of ICT to support and extend their work.

101. Achievement is good, given pupils' very low starting points when they join the school at the beginning of Year 7. They make good gains in their skills, knowledge and understanding of art and design. Gifted and talented pupils achieve well, and there are opportunities for extra activities at lunchtimes and after school. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because they can work directly and vigorously with materials, and they make good gains in their skills in media handling as a result. Pupils with English as an additional language achieve well because lessons often feature clear demonstrations so that pupils can see what they need to do to succeed. There is no discernible difference between the attainment or progress of pupils of different ethnic backgrounds.
102. Teaching and learning are good. In the best lessons, materials are used vigorously, and there are good demonstrations. For example, in a lesson on printmaking, pupils were briskly shown how to roll out ink thinly and evenly and apply it to achieve bright and clear results. They were encouraged to use the materials vigorously and to work fast. As a result, the learning atmosphere was active and confident, engagement with materials was very good, resulting in very good learning. At times, however, materials are not used as vigorously, and pupils' interest levels begin to fade. They begin to chat among themselves and do not try as hard as they could. When this happens, learning is no better than satisfactory.
103. Assessment procedures are consistently followed but pupils are not aware of their National Curriculum levels and do not have a clear idea of how well they are doing. As a result, they are not sure what they need to do to improve.
104. Leadership and management of the subject are good, and priorities for further development are clear. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development and they are introduced to the work of a good range of art and artists, including Dali, Miro and Duchamp. Visiting artists are used to extend this experience in planned workshop activities which include making felt wall hangings and ceramics. The art of other cultures, for example African and Asian art, is often used as a starting point for pupils' own artwork, and they also make vibrant carnival costumes. These activities help pupils to appreciate the richness and diversity of other cultures.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Leadership and management are good and ensure a clear direction to the subject.
- The quality of teaching is good and effectively promotes pupils' progress.
- Technical support is excellent.

Areas for improvement

- Pupils do not know their National Curriculum levels, therefore they do not know how to improve.
- Monitoring and evaluation of teaching are not yet fully in place.
- There is a lack of demarcation lines around machines.
- Some equipment is not useable because of the lack of components, which prevents pupils gaining the full experience of design and technology.

105. Standards of pupils on entry to the school are well below those expected. Very few have experienced handling wood, textiles and food, nor do they understand the design, making and evaluating process. Therefore, all pupils, including those who have English as an additional language, and the majority of those with special educational needs, make good progress to attain levels that are below those expected by Year 8. The few who exhibit challenging behaviour do not readily learn and do not make satisfactory progress. The progress that pupils make is due to the very good management of the subject and the good teaching that is focused on basic skills.
106. Pupils think up ideas for designs, but to a level below that expected. Some pupils collect and use information which is at the expected standard. This was seen when they were asked to use information to design kites. Although resources were available, not all used them for their design. Very few pupils show alternative ideas, using words, sketches and models to explain them. The standard of written work is poor and this affects the standards that pupils attain. Many pupils use tools with confidence but some Year 7 pupils are unable to use scissors and find it difficult to use a saw. The low level of attainment when pupils make objects is partly due to the lack of experience of handling tools at the primary phase. Pupils write plans for making but, again, their poor literacy skills affect the standards attained. Many pupils' evaluations have a level of attainment below that expected. For example, when evaluating a radio, one pupil stated that the 'sound was bad', while another had a satisfactory level of attainment when it was stated that 'the quality of sound would be improved if the aerial was fixed properly'. All pupils improve their drawing skills from a very low base and draw isometric and orthographic projections carefully by Year 8.
107. The quality of teaching is good overall leading to good learning and generally good attitudes from pupils. The good teaching is conducted at a rapid pace so that much is covered. Questioning is good as it makes pupils think and therefore learn. This was seen when pupils were asked how they could make a template the right shape. Careful questioning led the pupils to come to the conclusion that each side had to be the same, and the concept of symmetry was then introduced. Pupils are constantly praised for even small achievements, such as moving around the room quietly, which raises their self-esteem and makes them want to learn. Demonstrations are very good, for they not only show pupils what they have to do but they add to their knowledge, for example the different properties of wood and plastic. Where the teaching is satisfactory, often the task is undemanding and a stated time is not given for its completion which results in pupils' attention wandering. Also, where the pupils are lower attainers, the task is not broken up into small steps with the result that pupils forget most of the instructions. In addition, on occasion, pupils exhibit challenging behaviour and the teachers do not have a wealth of strategies to use, with the result that these pupils do not learn, and the learning of other pupils in the class is impeded. Marking is good, with comments about the task, but few targets for improvement are included. For example, good comments that help pupils to improve included 'You need to be clearer about what enables a circuit to flow'.
108. The majority of pupils are interested in design and technology and want to learn. They listen carefully and are watchful of each other. This was seen when a pupil explained in detail to another that he needed to make more than one design before selecting just one. They also ask for help, for example when they were using saws.
109. Leadership and management are very good. Planning is detailed and the evaluation of the first year of the school is comprehensive. This has formed the foundation of a department that has a clear idea of its future, and which is responsive to a changing

situation. The curriculum is good. The school has already used outside visitors and uses designs from other countries and over time, such as the art deco period. Assessment follows the school policy. Procedures are satisfactory but use of assessment is unsatisfactory. Pupils do not know their National Curriculum levels or how to attain them when starting a unit of work. There is a good system of self-assessment in place. Displays consist primarily of pupils' work, both in the rooms and in the school. This reflects the high priority placed on pupils' achievements. The accommodation is very good, with the exception of storage for consumables, which are, at present, housed in a spare classroom. This situation should be addressed before the need for storage becomes urgent. Demarcation lines to remind pupils not to crowd round machines are not in place in the workshops. Some of the machines cannot be used as they were supplied without the necessary components. This has resulted in changes to the scheme of work and, unless rectified, may result in design and technology not fulfilling the control element of ICT requirements in the National Curriculum for pupils in Years 7 to 9. Monitoring and evaluating teaching have yet to be established along with analysis by ethnicity and gender and use of monitoring information to target those who underperform. The department has excellent technical support staff. The technician, who has been in the school since its inception, has been invaluable in dealing with problems and supporting the head of department.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- Leadership and management of the subject are good.
- Procedures for assessment and the use of data to monitor and evaluate achievement are very good.
- Use of computers as an aid to teaching and learning is good.
- Commitment and capacity of teachers to raise standards are strong.

Areas for improvement

- The range of teaching and learning styles to meet the individual needs of pupils requires further development.
- Class management strategies need to be strengthened to ensure a minority do not interrupt the learning of others.
- The range of writing styles and opportunities for pupils need to be increased.
- There are not enough opportunities for practical/field study tasks.

110. By Year 8, though overall standards are well below the national average, over the year that pupils have been at the school, a significant majority have made good progress in relation to their very low subject knowledge, understanding and skills on entry in Year 7. By the time they are in Year 8, pupils' standards of work are better than when they started.

111. From observation in lessons and scrutiny of books, pupils are developing knowledge of the subject and skills are improving, particularly in relation to map work. Poor literacy skills, problems associated with short concentration spans and difficulty retaining and recalling information over time negatively influence achievement. Girls attain at a higher overall level than the boys. While there are a number of exceptions, the Asian and white ethnic groups attain at a higher level than other groups. Pupils do not find enquiry and practical work easy.

112. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers structure lessons effectively to develop pupils' knowledge and skills but, currently, too little attention is given to providing a wide enough range of tasks to meet all pupils' individual needs. There is a whole-class approach which is resulting in good progress but the higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, however, are currently making equivalent progress to other pupils, especially when given in-lesson support. Teachers are secure in their subject expertise and pupils' learning, starting from a very low base, is good. A minority of pupils, particularly in Year 8, displays poor attitudes and this impacts negatively on learning, influences the pace of lessons and interrupts the learning of the majority. In Year 7, pupils are developing a good understanding of direction and the use of grid references. This is a consequence of positive attitudes combined with skilful teaching and the use of appropriate tasks. Many pupils in both years find enquiry and thinking exercises very difficult. This was observed in Year 8 lessons and from the books, in relation to concepts involving weather and climate and local environmental work.
113. The department is led and managed well. Teachers work effectively as a team. There is a commitment to raise standards and the capacity to succeed. Assessment procedures are very good and data is used well to monitor and evaluate pupils' progress. Targets for improvement are set and National Curriculum levels assessed but, currently, they are not communicated to parents and pupils. The department has very good resources and computers are used effectively to assist learning. Further extension of practical tasks and local field study will benefit the growth of enquiry and thinking skills. As pupils' literacy skills, particularly writing, are very weak, opportunities for extended writing need to be built into lesson planning. The school is only just one year old but the appointment of new staff in humanities, formal monitoring and evaluating of teaching and learning and sharing good practice, currently not undertaken, would assist the raising of standards.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- Good teaching based on very good subject knowledge and relationships leads to good learning.
- The use of assessment to set targets to raise standards is very good.
- The leadership and management of the subject are very good.

Areas for improvement

- There is a need to better match work to the needs of lower attaining pupils so that they have better access to learning.
- Improved behaviour management strategies for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties are needed.

114. Attainment on entry is very low. The vast majority of pupils have a poor knowledge of history when they enter Year 7. Their grasp of the important skills required to study history is also poor. Standards in writing on entry are very poor.
115. Because of good teaching, pupils make good progress but standards are well below average by Year 8 because the starting point of the pupils is so very low. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress and the progress of those with special educational needs is satisfactory. The majority of pupils begin to develop enquiry skills because of the interesting and well-planned teaching which is fit for purpose.

Almost all pupils begin to analyse source material and discuss the differences between fact and opinion. Very good subject knowledge and enthusiasm evident in the best teaching results in Year 7 pupils beginning to give thoughtful ideas about what made the Roman army powerful. Much effort goes into encouraging pupils to work collaboratively and into promoting their speaking and listening skills when working together in pairs and small groups. Year 7 pupils are beginning to use words such as 'legion' in context which are relevant to the study of the Roman period.

116. By Year 8, a significant majority of pupils have a reasonable understanding of the impact of the Industrial Revolution and orally they can describe the importance of the Great Exhibition in 1851. Their writing skills let them down badly. Too few Year 8 pupils write complete sentences and the spelling of key words used in history is poor for far too many of them. In one lesson observed, some lower attaining pupils underachieved because they could not access the content of the lesson as the language used by the teacher when explaining a timed activity for the whole class was too difficult for them. Analysis of work indicates that some worksheets inhibit access to the content of the lesson because they contain words which are too difficult for some pupils to read. Work is not always sufficiently well matched to the needs of all pupils in the class and this sometimes results in restless and fussy behaviour which, in turn, has a negative effect on learning.
117. The quality of teaching is good overall. It ranges from satisfactory to very good. The best teaching is delivered at a cracking pace and results in all pupils remaining fully on task. In the best lessons, there are very good gains in learning about historical facts and the skills required to succeed in the subject. The development of pupils' literacy and ICT skills is very good. Very good subject knowledge and excellent relationships enable pupils to have the confidence to ask the teacher questions in lessons and this makes a very significant contribution to their learning as evidenced in the Year 7 lesson about why the Roman army was so successful. At its very best, there is much enjoyment in learning as evidenced in the Year 7 pieces of written work about the ingredients used to make the concoctions to cure people during the time of the Black Death. The modules taught contribute significantly to pupils' moral development and raise their awareness of cultural diversity. Shortcomings in teaching occur when the emotional and behavioural difficulties of a small minority of pupils in a class are not managed as skilfully as they could be and this impedes the learning not only for these pupils but also for their peers. Very good use is made of assessment to set targets and monitor progress for all pupils and results in raised standards. However, this is not sufficiently fine tuned to focus on what pupils need to do to improve their writing as well as what is needed to improve their standards in history. Minority ethnic pupils achieve well but the department is not yet given sufficiently robust information about the needs of pupils who are at an early stage of learning English. This is a weakness as the department cannot plan as rigorously as it would like to do so to meet their needs, though the generally high quality of teaching ensures that pupils are included well as learners in lessons and there is sensitive, ongoing support from class teachers.
118. The leadership and management are very good. Planning is very good and the subject is well resourced except for insufficient artefacts to bring the subject more alive, particularly for pupils with special educational needs.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- The consistently good teaching observed is responsible for the good progress made by the large majority of pupils.
- The teaching of pupils with specifically identified problems is very inclusive and helped considerably by the strong liaison between teachers and the support assistant.
- The quantity and quality of the ICT equipment and its accommodation are excellent.
- Teaching benefits from the quality of the new equipment and the high level of support from the network manager and the technician.

Areas for improvement

- More rigorous use of assessment data is needed in which pupils' attainment levels are analysed in greater detail to monitor progress, set targets and to inform planning.
- The planning of future developments needs to be more detailed and focused.
- The numbers in the mixed-ability classes are large and there is a need for additional support in lessons for pupils with special educational needs.

119. The level of pupils' attainment on entry is significantly below expectations. The majority have very poor keyboard skills and limited knowledge but the level of progress made in Year 7 is good and so standards of attainment by Year 8, whilst still below expectations, have improved. Pupils can now use standard spreadsheet formulae to make simple calculations and can represent the results of those calculations in the form of coloured graphs and charts, some of which are three-dimensional.

120. That degree of improvement indicates that learning for the majority is good. Where learning is at least good, pupils respond well to the very encouraging relationships established by their teacher. They volunteer to read aloud in class and to answer questions. They work co-operatively together and sustain a reasonably high level of concentration. They have developed confidence and have progressed well from a very poor knowledge base. Where learning is less than good, teachers have to work hard to keep a small minority of pupils focused who present quite challenging behaviour, which disrupts their own attention and that of others and, consequently, underachieve.

121. The quality of pupils' learning is good because teaching is good. Relationships are good and the level of teachers' subject knowledge is very high. As a result, procedures are clearly explained and supported by up-to-date technological resources. Pupils in Year 7 demonstrated to their peers on the interactive whiteboard how to capture a text box to make copies of it, which served both to boost their confidence and reinforce their learning. Teachers are aware of the problems of pupils who have special educational needs and/or language difficulties. Some pupils in Year 8, for whom English is an additional language, use standard software procedures quite competently and answer simply worded test questions, although their extended writing contains errors of spelling and expression. There is an effective integration of the work of the support assistant into the teaching. Both teacher and assistant work co-operatively together and, as a result, teaching is inclusive and lessons are planned well so that pupils with special educational needs make good progress, whilst additional tasks can offer greater challenge to those who are more talented. Having been taught how to use the 'repeat' procedure when programming in LOGO, higher attaining Year 8 pupils worked out correctly how to program drawing a circle, which involved their understanding of geometry. In view of the level of special educational needs in the school, there is insufficient classroom support to meet its demands, a situation that is exacerbated by

large class sizes. Teachers have reasonably high expectations of their pupils and set work that is quite demanding for their level of ability.

122. Leadership and management of ICT are good. Forward planning is good but priorities in development plans need to be more sharply specified and clearly prioritised. There are good arrangements in place to ensure child protection in relation to Internet and e-mail use. There is a supervised computer club at lunch times, during which the pupils observed were either practising typing skills or programming in LOGO. The department has very effective operational links with the main feeder primary schools. Marking is thoroughly done but attainment levels are neither reported nor used with rigour to monitor progress or inform planning. The provision of up-to-date equipment is excellent and accommodated mainly in good-sized, air-conditioned rooms. The network manager and the technician support the department very efficiently. The network manager's technical knowledge is supplemented strongly by an educational dimension arising out of his previous experience, which gives added weight in planning future developments.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

123. The application and use of ICT across the curriculum overall is good. It is good in English, geography, history, physical education, religious education and the learning support department and satisfactory in modern foreign languages and science. It is unsatisfactory in mathematics, art and design, design and technology and music. ICT is embedded in all departmental programmes of study but it is not fully operative in them. In some cases, there are good reasons for this. In mathematics, for example, a specific software package has been ordered but not as yet supplied.
124. In several subjects, pupils research topics relating to their work on Internet sites. In art and design, pupils have used wordprocessing to write about artists and to make personal analyses of specific paintings. In English, wordprocessing and desk top publishing are used by pupils to enhance their work, and portable AlphaSmart keyboards are used to help dyslexic pupils identify words spelled incorrectly. In geography, pupils use computer software to analyse data obtained on a local fieldwork survey and, in physical education, dance movements are analysed on a computer-video link, and monitors attached to computers check the heart rates of pupils when they are undergoing fitness tests. The special educational needs department has its own equipment to accommodate small groups using specific software to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. The library has a complete suite of 30 networked workstations all linked to the Internet and they are used for class instruction and research.
125. There is no curriculum ICT development group to help drive the use of ICT across subjects and to initiate systems for assessing and recording pupils' progress.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

Strengths

- The emphasis placed on the quality of teaching and learning and the staff's insistence on matching teaching styles to the pupils' preferred learning styles.
- The positive and caring attitude shown by staff to all pupils. This has created an inclusive environment of mutual respect.
- The high level of expectation teachers set for themselves and for all their pupils.
- The positive, enthusiastic leadership provided by the head of department.
- The careful monitoring and evaluation of pupils' work.

Areas for improvement

- There is a need to fully integrate ICT into the schemes of work for French and Spanish to help pupils develop their independent learning.
- To develop strategies for motivating and improving the in-class behaviour and attainment of a minority of boys.

126. Pupils make good progress in learning French. Though by Year 8, standards are well below average, there is good improvement in pupils' work from the time they started. Writing skills are below national expectations. There is a significant difference in attainment between boys and girls. Girls are overall attaining higher levels than boys. Pupils of African-Caribbean heritage are not doing as well as other ethnic groups. More able pupils, both boys and girls and across all ethnic groups, have limited opportunity for independent study. Pupils taking Spanish have been studying it for only a few weeks and are making satisfactory progress.

127. Although pupils' attainment on entry to the school is well below national expectations, their good progress represents good value added. Overall, girls make better progress than boys. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language make good progress. Pupils with behavioural difficulties make satisfactory progress. The good progress made by pupils is largely attributable to meticulous lesson planning incorporating a variety of audio-visual material, including expert use of the interactive whiteboard, in addition to the wide use of French and Spanish for the everyday business of the classroom.

128. Pupils in the present Year 7, including those with special educational needs, have made a very good start, already demonstrating great confidence in speaking. In one lesson, a pupil with special educational needs is observed to go independently to the Language Master (a device which records the pupils' written and spoken language) to practise his speaking and listening skills. During a Year 7 form time, a pupil happily converses in his mother tongue, which is one of the foreign languages taught in the school. Other pupils see this as an affirmation of the value of learning a foreign language for everyday communication.

129. Most pupils in Year 8, except those who need additional support in literacy and numeracy, have started to study Spanish as a second language. They are able to give short answers to the teacher's questions and to questions asked by other pupils in the class. When listening to short phrases on the tape-recorder, most pupils are able to give correct answers when finding information from a short reading passage. They speak confidently when saying how many brothers or sisters they have. At present, writing skills are in the early stages. Pupils can write short sentences and are

encouraged to spell correctly newly learned vocabulary. In one Spanish class, the tape-recorder is stopped and slowed down more frequently than would be expected. When given a short text, pupils are able to extract correct information. In some Year 8 classes, there is a minority of boys whose progress is impeded by their expressive behaviour.

130. In all lessons observed, pupils respond confidently in both French and Spanish. All pupils have ample opportunities in lessons for spontaneous speech, as well as taking part in choral drills and group work. They are able to respond to visual clues by using some memorised language in French. The more advanced pupils are able to use conjunctions and express opinions to give a more natural flow to their speech. Interesting and varied classroom displays reflect both pupils' work and key vocabulary referred to during lessons.
131. Overall the quality of teaching is good or better in almost all the lessons observed. The overall quality of learning is good. The best lessons are carefully planned with built-in work to meet individual needs within the mixed-ability groups. In an excellent lesson observed, the teacher prepared four different levels of work with in-class support. In that lesson, pupils of higher ability were also supported by the French assistant. Teachers know individual pupils very well and expect high standards from them. All lessons observed start by sharing clear aims and objectives with pupils and end with a plenary session to agree with pupils whether aims and objectives are met. In addition, the use of rapidly changing activities followed by an interim check gives pupils the ability to understand how well they are expected to do and how they can improve. The use of the interactive whiteboard is particularly useful for promoting independent learning.
132. The department is very well led. It is also well resourced, although there are few books in the department library as yet. There is limited use of ICT. This especially hinders the more able pupils. Pupils' attitudes to French and Spanish are positive. They take pride in all aspects of their work. Teachers regularly set homework. The marking policy is not yet applied consistently but the majority of work seen includes comments telling each pupil how to improve. There is careful monitoring and evaluation of pupils' work. This includes careful observation of gender and ethnic performance differences as well as the effects of having English as an additional language. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is also carefully monitored. Overall, the quality of provision in French is good and, in Spanish, it is satisfactory at this early stage.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- The cultural provision for music is very good.
- The quality of leadership is good.
- Pupils are well taught.

Areas for improvement

- There is no provision to teach music using ICT.
- Assessment techniques are underdeveloped.

133. Pupils come to the school with well below average levels of attainment and, by Year 8, standards are below average. Achievement is good. Pupils with special educational needs and with particular talents make good progress. Pupils with English as an additional language make similar progress to other pupils. In work seen, most pupils can make simple modifications to short riffs and perform them. A minority improvise

fluently. Listening skills and knowledge of music are poor and pupils struggle to evaluate each other's work.

134. The attitudes of pupils are satisfactory. Low-level challenges to discipline are effectively managed. Relationships between staff and pupils are good.
135. Music is well taught. The teachers' subject knowledge is very good. Lessons are structured in detail and discipline is firm but sensitive. A good variety of methods and presentations are used. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported. Good use is made of teacher assessment and pupils' self-assessment. Good use is made of regular homework. The teaching of basic skills is satisfactory. As a result of these features, the standards of learning are good. Pupils know how they have made progress and they make sustained efforts to improve their work. The pace of learning is good and pupils' understanding of music is thoroughly challenged and extended.
136. At the start of a Year 7 lesson, atmospheric music settled pupils and lesson aims were clearly explained. Pupils discussed emotions presented in the music and the teacher then effectively demonstrated how sound could express the meaning of a simple story. Progress was good and, as a result of good timing, pupils could sustain their efforts to create a musical story. Pupils with special educational needs had the advantage of large print resources. All pupils gained sufficient confidence in working together to be able to perform in front of the class.
137. A Year 8 class started energetic testing on riffs and variation. The pupils had a wide range of ability but all were included through oral teaching. Pupils were able to work in separate areas and were able to talk about their progress. Pupils were also supported with good discipline and able tutoring. The final recording session showed off good levels of productive working. Good homework was set on 'How can we improve our work?'
138. The music department is led by an enthusiastic and talented musician who provides a very positive role model in the school. The tone of the department is quickly being established and it is very responsive to pupils' needs and their cultural backgrounds. There is good provision for extra-curricular activities through singing groups, drumming clubs and visiting teachers. The department makes a very good contribution to the cultural education of pupils through workshops and events such as the talent show and carnival. The curriculum in Years 7 to 8 is broad and well planned but there is no provision for pupils to learn about music using ICT. The quality of accommodation and staffing is good. Resources are satisfactory but there are insufficient computers. Assessment procedures are at an early stage of development and are not yet clearly linked to teachers' planning and schemes of work.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- The effective management of the pupils that creates a caring and effective working environment.
- Rapid rate of improvement for all pupils, especially those with special educational needs.
- The quality of teaching to meet the differing needs of all pupils is very good.
- The quality and range of extra-curricular activities is very good.

Areas for improvement

- Prompter start to lessons.
- The total involvement of non-participants in the learning process of the lesson.
- The assessment procedures to monitor progress by gender and ethnicity.

139. The overall standards of pupils' work in Year 8 are broadly in line with national averages. They arrive at the school below average with a natural talent that has mostly gone untapped. This represents very good achievement over a short period of time. Particular strengths are ball skills in games such as netball and football. Both boys and girls, particularly African Caribbean, have good control and are agile when moving about the court. Pupils are quick to learn new skills but are not always good at transferring newly learnt skills into the final game. A few have above average racket skills but generally tend to play shots with a square stance and find it difficult to vary the type of shot. They have good anticipation of the shuttle or ball and are ready to move. The pupils who are below average have limited co-ordination and find it difficult to control the ball with either feet or racket. Listening skills are poor and pupils often require considerable repetition to gain the required information. They answer questions readily but only in one or two words and with limited use of technical vocabulary.
140. The quality of teaching and its impact on the pupils' learning is good with some very good and excellent features. The management of pupils, especially those with challenging behaviour, is excellent. This creates an effective learning environment that enables pupils to achieve and enjoy their lessons. In the best lessons, there is a high expectation of work rate and tasks meet the differing needs of all pupils. Effective links are drawn between different activities. This was particularly effective in a racket skills lesson where pupils moved from short tennis to badminton, transferring former skills and learning new ones. Other features that work well but could be developed further are question and answer sessions to provoke thought and consolidate knowledge, pupil and teacher demonstration to develop evaluative skills, and tasks to encourage more independent learning. Teachers are very aware of pupils with special educational needs. They consider the best way to involve them and encourage them in lessons resulting in very good progress. Pupils with physical disabilities have individual programmes to meet their needs. There is good liaison with the learning support unit. When lessons are slow to start, the final activity is rushed and pupils do not always successfully transfer newly learnt skills into the game. Those pupils who are unable to actively participate are not totally involved in the learning process of the lesson.
141. Pupils are mostly enthusiastic in lessons and enjoy the varied extra-curricular programme where they are already enjoying success at local and regional levels in a number of activities such as athletics, cricket, netball and football. A few pupils are reluctant to practise diligently in order to refine their skills and sometimes have a slapdash approach if not sufficiently challenged. They work well together in mixed ethnic groups. They can be encouraging of each other's efforts but often have to be prompted into applause. They understand the expected code of behaviour within the department and respect and like their teachers.
142. Leadership and management of this new department are very good. Policies, schemes of work and departmental systems are being carefully planned, reviewed and changed to meet ongoing needs. Hard work and perceptive vision give clear educational direction and reflect the desired ethos of the school. Assessment systems are in place but do not yet systematically identify the difference in progress of ethnic groups or gender.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- The commitment of a new teacher in charge of the subject to raise the status of religious education and the standards achieved.
- Some examples of good teaching and very secure subject knowledge.

Areas for improvement

- Timetabling arrangements and the time allocated to the subject.
- Range of resources, particularly religious artefacts.
- Range of teaching styles to meet all pupils' individual needs.
- Visits and links with local faith communities.
- Literacy skills, particularly writing.
- Behaviour strategies to ensure a minority do not interrupt the learning of the majority.

143. Progress during the one year pupils have been in the school has been satisfactory, considering their low knowledge and understanding of religions on entry to the school in Year 7. By Year 8, the overall standard of attainment is still well below the expectation of the locally agreed syllabus.

144. From observations in lessons and looking at books, pupils are beginning to develop satisfactory knowledge, but less understanding, of the nature of religious education. Books indicate a satisfactory grasp of the relevance and importance of Bible stories to Christianity, Islam and Judaism. In lessons, progress is being made in developing pupils' individual views of religion and their own place in the wider picture. Progress for the majority, however, has been hindered by a number of factors. These include weak literacy skills, short concentration spans and some poor behaviour, particularly in Year 8. This is added to by the limited time allocated to the subject and timetabling arrangements which hinder progression and continuity. Girls are generally attaining at a higher level than the boys. While there are many individual exceptions, white and Asian pupils attain at a higher level than other minority ethnic groups.

145. Teaching and learning within the parameters of a small allocation of time are satisfactory, with some examples of good teaching and progress. While pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are generally well supported and, as a consequence, make equivalent progress with their peers, higher ability pupils are not always sufficiently challenged. This is because current teaching styles are limited and are mainly whole-class based and there is too little variation of tasks to meet the individual needs of all pupils. Lessons tend to be pitched towards the low and middle ability groups. Pace in some lessons is not rigorous enough, mainly as a result of poor attitudes from a minority of pupils, and this has a negative influence on the learning of others. Weak literacy skills and the lack of opportunities to undertake longer pieces of writing also restrict learning. In several lessons, however, pupils were given good opportunities to develop listening and speaking skills. This was seen in both years in lessons exploring a worldview of religion and how it affects the individual. In these lessons, pupils were thinking effectively about their own response to religion.

146. The school appointed a specialist teacher at the start of the current academic year. A good start has been made in assessing priorities for development. There is now clear educational leadership and direction for the subject and a commitment to raise its status and the standards pupils achieve. Religious education does not have sufficient time on the timetable to fully cover the agreed syllabus programme of study. The

combining of personal and social education with religious education in three-week blocks results in a lack of continuity and this has a negative impact on learning. The subject is currently inadequately resourced although orders are now being placed. Some exploratory links are being planned with community faith groups to raise pupils' awareness and knowledge of the wide range of religions represented in the local and school community, but which currently do not exist. Teaching and learning activities are too limited.