

INSPECTION REPORT

**LOXFORD SCHOOL OF SCIENCE AND
TECHNOLOGY**

Iford

LEA area: Redbridge

Unique reference number: 102853

Headteacher: Ms H Farrow

Reporting inspector: Mr J Plumb
16930

Dates of inspection: 10 – 14 February 2003

Inspection number: 249559

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 students: 11 to 19 years

Gender of students: Mixed

School address: Loxford Lane
Ilford
Essex

Postcode: IG1 2UT

Telephone number: 020 8514 4666

Fax number: 020 8514 6257

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr P Ballard

Date of previous inspection: February 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
16930	Mr J Plumb	Registered inspector		<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>The school's results and students' achievements</p> <p>How well are students taught?</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p>
12775	Ms J Goodchild	Lay inspector	Education inclusion, including race equality	<p>Students' attitudes, values and personal development</p> <p>How well does the school care for its students?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
15268	Mr J English	Team inspector	Mathematics	
30941	Mr K Brammer	Team inspector	English Media studies in the sixth form	
32355	Ms P Robins	Team inspector	Special educational needs English in the sixth form	
4922	Mr M Driver	Team inspector	Science	
20832	Mr M Galowalia	Team inspector	English as an additional language Biology in the sixth form	
18057	Mr M Baxter	Team inspector	Chemistry in the sixth form	
24453	Mr G Jackson	Team inspector	Physics in the sixth form	
8672	Mr M Roberts	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
4757	Mr D Morris	Team inspector	Art and design	
8076	Mr T Bendall	Team inspector	Design and technology	
32147	Ms A Wallis	Team inspector	Citizenship Geography	
31329	Ms K Barratt	Team inspector	History	

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect Responsibilities
12408	Mr A Frith	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages French in the sixth form	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to students?
30646	Mr T Creissen	Team inspector	Music	
25748	Mr R Moyle	Team inspector	Physical education	
32337	Mr N Chandla	Team inspector	Religious education	
27407	Mr W Stoneham	Team inspector	Business studies and economics in the sixth form	
4351	Ms J Strickland	Team inspector	Drama in the sixth form	

The inspection contractor was:

Bench Marque Ltd
National Westminster Bank Chambers
Victoria Street
Burnham-on-Sea
Somerset
TA8 1AN

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London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is a larger than average 11 – 19 community comprehensive school. It has specialist status as a third phase technology college with a distinctive ‘can do’ philosophy which emphasises the success of every student. It has just been positioned very highly in the published national value added league table, a much deserved recognition of the very good achievement of its students due to the very good teaching they experience. There are 1,514 students on roll. It has an above average size sixth form. Attainment on entry in Year 7 is well below the national average. The school serves a very disadvantaged community which presents many challenges. Just over 41 per cent of students are eligible for free school meals, a figure significantly above the national average. Thirty one per cent of the students are included on the school’s register of special educational needs (SEN), a proportion significantly above the national average. Just fewer than two per cent of students have statements of special educational need, a figure in line with the national average. Ninety-three per cent of the students are from minority ethnic backgrounds, a very high figure and well above the national average. Sixteen per cent of the students are refugees and 22 students in Years 10 and 11 are new entrants to the country. The number of students with English as an additional language (EAL), 87.4 per cent, is very high, and not far short of 200 students are at an early stage of English language learning. Fifty-seven mother tongue languages are spoken, the main languages being Urdu, Panjabi, Bengali and Gujarati. There is very high mobility amongst the student population. The school is at the cutting edge of a number of exciting local and national initiatives.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Loxford School of Science and Technology is a very good school with a number of outstanding features. Standards achieved are very good because of very good teaching and learning. All students are provided with the opportunity to succeed in this outstandingly inclusive school. The headteacher and senior leadership team provide excellent and inspirational leadership. Management is very good overall. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Very good achievement and above average GCSE results because of the very good teaching and learning.
- The pastoral care for students is very good.
- This is an all inclusive school which focuses on the success of every student.
- The provision for EAL is excellent.
- Standards attained at GCSE in community languages are above the national average and are impressive.
- The leadership of the headteacher and the other members of the senior leadership team is excellent.
- Financial management is excellent.
- The curriculum for students in Years 10 and 11 is very good.
- Very good provision and excellent leadership and management in the English and information and communication technology (ICT) departments.
- The library is an excellent resource and is used very effectively to support the learning of the students.

What could be improved

- The vast majority of students in Years 10 and 11 do not receive their entitlement to religious education.
- The management of design and technology could be improved to raise standards in systems and control and resistant materials.
- More use could be made of computers to support the teaching of subjects across the curriculum.
- The accommodation could be improved.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Improvements since the last inspection in February 1997 have been very good. Standards achieved in literacy across the curriculum have improved. The leadership and management of ICT have been transformed beyond recognition since then and are now excellent. The support given to students with challenging behaviour is now good. The management of vocational courses is significantly better. Provision for students' spiritual development is now good. Religious education provision in Years 10 and 11 remains unsatisfactory. GCSE results have improved very significantly since the last inspection. The leadership of the headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team is now excellent. However, there are now unsatisfactory features in the management of design and technology, and this is worse than at the time of the last inspection. There have been significant improvements to the sixth form curriculum except for the fact that sixth form students still do not receive their entitlement to religious education. Although students do not experience a daily act of collective worship as at the time of the last inspection the management of such an activity would prove very difficult as it would prove nigh on impossible to get all of the students into the school hall.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by students at the end of Year 11 and sixth form students at the end of Year 13 based on average point scores in GCSE and A-level/AS-level examinations.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
GCSE examinations	B	B	B	A*
A-levels/AS-levels	E	*	*	

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

These GCSE calculations have been arrived at by removing the significant refugee component to make the table fair.

* The 2001 average point score figures are calculated differently from previous years and so straight comparisons between 2000 and 2001 are not possible. Comparative data for 2002 has not yet been published.

Attainment on entry is well below the national average. In 2002, results in the national tests for students by the end of Year 9 were well below the national average in English and science and below the national average in mathematics. Compared with similar schools (as determined by free school meals) standards were well above average in mathematics and above average in English and science. The number of five or more GCSE passes at grades A* - C in 2002 were above the national average and very high when compared to similar schools. This indicates very good achievement and explains why the school has been placed so highly in the national value added league table published for the first time this year.

Standards in English and science are below the national average in Year 9 and close to the national average in Year 11. Standards in mathematics are in line with the national average in Year 9 and in Year 11. Standards are average to above or well above average in other subjects except in French and Spanish where standards fall marginally below average in Year 9 and the resistant material and systems and control aspects of design and technology where they fall below in Year 11. In religious education the vast majority of students in Years 10 and 11 are not provided with the opportunity to reach the standards expected by the locally agreed syllabus and this is an issue. In the sixth form, achievement is very good in most subjects. Standards achieved by students with SEN are good. Students with EAL achieve very good standards. Gifted and talented students achieve good standards in Years 7 to 9 and very good standards in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form.

STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Students are keen to learn. The majority of students are eager to succeed.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Behaviour in lessons is often very good. Outside of lessons behaviour is often boisterous and a lack of courtesy to others is sometimes evident.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Students' initiative and personal responsibility are very good. Race relations are excellent.
Attendance	Good. Attendance is good but many students were absent during the week of the inspection because it fell during the Eid festival.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of students:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11	Years 12 – 13
Quality of teaching	Good	Very good	Very 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.

Overall the quality of teaching is very good. In Years 7 to 9 teaching is good overall and in Years 10 and 11 teaching is very good overall. There is a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching. There is some excellent teaching. Teaching is very good in English in Years 10 and 11 and very good overall in science. Teaching is good in English in Years 7 to 9 and good overall in mathematics throughout the school. Some excellent teaching was seen in art and design, English, history, ICT, modern foreign languages, music and personal, social and health education (PSHE). Teaching in almost all subjects has very good features: very good subject knowledge; outstandingly good behaviour management; cracking pace; an exciting range of teaching and learning strategies; and learning outcomes which are shared with the students. The small amount of unsatisfactory and poor teaching in design and technology and geography is characterised by slow pace, lack of challenge and work not being appropriately matched to the needs of the students. Teaching of students with SEN is good overall but their needs are not met in all lessons. Teaching of students with EAL is very good and excellent. Departments are at an early stage of development of strategies to teach students identified as gifted and talented.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The curriculum is good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. All students are provided with the maximum opportunity to succeed. However, the provision for religious education for the majority of students in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory and the provision for systems and control and resistant materials is weak. ICT is not used sufficiently to support the teaching of all subjects across the curriculum.
Provision for students with	Good. Although good overall the SEN policy, including significant

special educational needs	changes as a result of the new Code of Practice, has not yet been ratified by the governing body.
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Aspect	Comment
Provision for students with English as an additional language	Excellent. The leadership and management of EAL are excellent.
Provision for students' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
How well the school cares for its students	Very good with some outstanding features. Child protection procedures are very good. Procedures for monitoring behaviour are very good. Procedures for monitoring attendance are good. The pastoral support plans for disaffected students at risk of exclusion are excellent. The system for dealing with racist incidents is robust. Assessment procedures are very good.

Partnership with parents/carers is very good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership is excellent. Management is very good. The leadership of the headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team is excellent. The leadership of middle managers is very good overall: it ranges from excellent in English, ICT and EAL to unsatisfactory in design and technology. Management systems are very good but they are not implemented consistently by all curriculum team leaders. The aims and values of the school are excellent. Strategic thinking and the whole-school planning process are excellent.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good overall. The governing body meets most of its statutory responsibilities well. However, the vast majority of students in Years 10 and 11 do not have an entitlement to follow the programmes of study as set out in the locally agreed syllabus for religious education and this is an unsatisfactory situation.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. There are very good systems for monitoring and evaluating performance. The headteacher has a clear picture of the strengths and also the areas in need of improvement in the school.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Financial planning is excellent. Teachers and learning support assistants are effectively and efficiently deployed and this makes a significant contribution to the high standards achieved by students. The application of the principles of best value is very good.

Despite the recruitment and retention difficulties experienced by this inner city comprehensive school the overall match of suitably qualified and experienced teachers to meet the needs of the curriculum is good. There have been improvements to the accommodation since the last inspection but significant improvements are needed. Resources are satisfactory in most subjects.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The very friendly atmosphere and the fact that the staff are so supportive.• The fact that their children like school.• The support given to students with EAL.• The summer school activities, particularly science.• The very good ICT equipment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parents would like to see a halal meat option on the school dinner menu.• Some parents expressed concern about the behaviour of some students out of school in the community.• Some parents considered that communication with them could be better and that the school could work more closely with them.

Inspection findings support and agree with the parents'/carers' positive views of the school. Some students do misbehave on the way to and from school and the school does all that it can to manage this situation. The inspection team does consider that parents are justified in their concern about a lack of a halal meat option at lunchtime. However, there is considerable evidence of robust structures and systems to ensure quality communication and working in partnership with parents/carers.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

The sixth form has 309 students on roll, a figure significantly above the national average. Numbers have increased significantly since the last inspection and this puts a strain on the accommodation. Almost all of the sixth formers have transferred from Year 11 within the school but some are admitted from other schools and some join straight from overseas. On rare occasions a student is admitted from special schools and currently there is one student with a statement of special educational needs. The proportion of minority ethnic students is well above the national average as is the proportion of EAL students but rarely are students in the sixth form at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of refugees is much higher than the national average. A significant proportion of students come from disadvantaged backgrounds. This is a truly comprehensive sixth form committed to providing the right courses for every student so that every student experiences success. Attainment on entry is varied but low attainers have access to high quality courses alongside high attainers. There is a very good range of AS- and A-level courses and the vocational courses on offer are also very good. This means, for example, that a student can access physics via the traditional AS-/A-level route or by the AVCE route and this indicates how the school has been imaginative in its curriculum planning to fulfil its aim of equality and success for all.

HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

The sixth form provision is very good. Standards of attainment in Years 12 and 13 vary across subjects but achievement is very good in almost all subjects taken in the sixth form. There is a high proportion of very good and excellent teaching in the sixth form and because of this the vast majority of students achieve very well when measured against their starting point. Eleven per cent of teaching observed was judged to be inspirational; a high proportion of excellent teaching. Students gain in maturity and become responsible citizens who are well equipped to cope with the next step in their adult journey. By the time they leave, they have the independence skills and confidence to cope with college, university or the world of work. Students interviewed stated clearly that they really enjoy life in the sixth form and they all spoke warmly of the head of the sixth form. Attendance is good. The sixth form provides very good value for money.

Strengths

- The very good and the high proportion of excellent teaching based on very good subject knowledge and often delivered at a cracking pace engages students' interest and results in very good achievement.
- In ICT and A-level art, economics and law, students consistently achieve above their target grades.
- The leadership of the sixth form is charismatic and as a result every student is fired up and enthused to reach her or his full potential.
- The curriculum on offer is very good and ensures equality of access for all.
- Attitudes and behaviour in the sixth form are a strength and relationships between students and their teachers are stunningly good.

What could be improved

- The school could provide sports-related courses in the sixth form.
- The numbers who opt to take design and technology courses could be increased.
- The amount and quality of the accommodation for the sixth form could be improved.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan. Strengths and areas for improvement in individual subjects are identified in the sections on individual subjects in the full report.

THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN INDIVIDUAL CURRICULUM AREAS

The table below shows overall judgements about the provision in the subjects and courses that were inspected in the sixth form. Judgements are based mainly on the quality of teaching and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects in the sixth form were inspected.

Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
Mathematics	Good. Standards are in line with national expectations in both AS- and A-level. Achievement is good. The quality of teaching is good.
Biology	Good. Standards of achievement are good because the quality of teaching is good. Standards seen are average.
Chemistry	Very good. Very good learning because of very good teaching. Standards attained are average.
Physics	Good. The very good subject knowledge of the teacher and the thoroughness of the teaching ensure that high levels of understanding and learning are achieved. This has resulted in a significant improvement in standards attained in the 2002 AS- and A-level examinations compared to earlier years.
AVCE Science	Good. Good progress but teaching is very good. The difference between teaching and learning reflects the prior attainment of the students. Good achievement but standards of attainment are below the national average.
Design and technology	Satisfactory. Teaching is mainly good and students achieve well in lessons. Examination results are broadly in line with national expectations although few students of higher ability take the subject.
Business studies	Good. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Standards of work seen based on the evidence available during the inspection are below average.
Economics	Very good. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Achievement is very good and standards are well above average.
Information technology and computing	Very good. Standards at the end of Year 13 are above average. Teaching and learning are very good and so achievement is very good. The quality of leadership and management is excellent.
Art	Very good. Standards in the AS- and A-level courses are high. Students are achieving very well as a consequence of excellent teaching.
Drama	Good. Teaching and learning are good and so the standards achieved measured against prior attainment are good even though they are below the national average.
Media studies	Very good. Students make very good progress because of high quality teaching and their own positive attitudes to the subject.
History	Very good. Standards achieved are very good because of the very good teaching and learning. Attainment is average.
English	Very good. Achievement is very good because of the very good teaching and learning. However, standards attained remain below the national average because of the students' low starting point. The leadership and management of English are excellent.
French	Very good. Teaching enables students to derive considerable benefit from the course. Achievement is good and standards are in line with course expectations at this stage in the course.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	Very good. Year 11 students receive very good advice and guidance about the courses on offer in the sixth form. Because of the philosophy of 'success for all' students can access subjects at a level appropriate to their prior attainment due to the very good curriculum package on offer. Students can access biology, chemistry and physics via the AS-level/A-level route or via the AVCE route and this is the strength of this sixth form. Induction into the sixth form is excellent. Key skills are provided for all students who need to develop them. Students interviewed stated that the support they receive from their teachers is very good. Many said that teachers make time for them before and after school. A student who has been offered a place at Imperial College said that the head of sixth form worked with him on improving his skills and confidence in interview technique before he went off to have his university interview. Students interviewed said that they were more than pleased with the quality of the careers support they had received and the inspectors agree with their views.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	Leadership inspirational. Management very good. The head of the sixth form is an inspirational leader committed to the success of every sixth form student. He could not work harder in their interests! Monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning across all subjects, although very good overall, is not consistent and so management overall is very good. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are rising in the sixth form. Analysis of value added data suggests that the vast majority of sixth form students make very good progress measured against their prior attainment.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

What students like about the sixth form	What they feel could be improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are very happy and enjoy their life in the sixth form. • They consider that the teaching they receive in their subjects is very good. They believe that there is a very good balance between challenge and support. • Whether going out to work when they leave or going on to Oxbridge they feel that they are given the same robust support and encouragement every step of the way by the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They consider that the accommodation could be improved. • They would like more opportunities to participate in recreational sport during school time. • A very significant number of students indicated on the student questionnaires that they returned that the provision for careers advice could be much improved.

Inspectors agree totally with all of the positive findings from the sixth form survey and from discussions with a range of sixth form students. The school recognises that they are justified in their concerns about the accommodation, and the headteacher and the chair of the governing body have done all that they possibly can to improve the sixth form accommodation. The school recognises the benefits of a sports programme for sixth form students and states that it will do what it can to plan for and implement a programme. In-depth discussions with students about the provision for careers education revealed that they did not consider planned visits to universities and places of work to be part of this provision and

during conversation with them they began to realise that they have quite good careers provision. Of course the school recognises that it is early days with respect to Connexions (external careers provision) bedding down and that the quality of the external support can always be improved further.

COMPARING PROVISION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

Inspectors make judgements about provision in subjects and courses, and about leadership and management, in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. Excellent and very good are equivalent to the judgement 'outstanding' in further education and sixth form college reports; poor and very poor are equivalent to 'very weak'.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and students' achievements

1. Attainment on entry is well below the national average. Attainment in the 2002 National Curriculum tests for students at the end of Year 9 in English and science was well below the national average and in mathematics it was below. Compared with similar schools, as determined by the proportion of students eligible for free school meals, standards were well above average in mathematics and above in English and science. Girls' results were above those of boys in English and science and boys did marginally better than girls in mathematics.
2. By the end of Year 11 in 2002, once the refugee component is removed from the calculation (as advised by the DfES), the proportion of students who attained five or more GCSE passes at A* - C (53 per cent) was above the national average. Compared with similar schools it was very high. Results at five or more A* - G and one or more A* - G were very high compared to all schools and also compared to similar schools. These results indicate very good achievement and resulted in the school being very highly positioned in the national value added league table published for the first time in 2003.
3. There has been a continuous improvement in GCSE results since 1998. Variations in the performance in National Curriculum tests for 14-year-olds must be seen in the context of the profile of the different cohorts from one year to the next. The proportion of students with SEN is high and there can be significantly more students with SEN in Year 9 from one year to the next. The school admits refugees in Year 9, all of whom are at an early stage of learning English. Historical trends and data analysed by the inspection team suggest that the National Curriculum tests for 14-year-olds and particularly the GCSE results have improved very significantly since the last inspection.
4. Standards of work seen in English in Year 9 are below national expectations in reading and writing but average in speaking and listening. By Year 11 standards in writing and reading are close to the national average. Speaking and listening skills by Year 11 are well developed and in line with the national average; most 16-year-old students use talk to negotiate and solve problems, to make decisions and to refine and extend their ideas through discussion. Standards of work seen in mathematics are in line with the national average by Year 9 and also by Year 11. This indicates a very significant improvement since the last inspection. In science standards of work seen are below the national average by Year 9 but are very close to the national average by Year 11.
5. In art and design, history and ICT, standards are average by Year 9 and well above by Year 11. In citizenship and geography, standards are average by both Year 9 and Year 11. In French and Spanish, standards are close to the average by Year 9 but remain marginally below and by Year 11, standards are well above the national average in both languages. Standards by Year 11 in the community languages of Bengali, Panjabi and Urdu are well above the national average. In physical education, standards are in line with the national average by Year 9 and above by Year 11. Standards in music are above the national average by Year 9, but for those students taking a GCSE course, standards are in line with the national average by Year 11.
6. Standards of work seen in Year 9 in design and technology are in line with the national average by Year 9. By Year 11, standards in design and technology are very variable

and this is a matter of concern as identified by the school. Standards in food technology and textiles are in line with the national average by Year 11 but standards are not high enough in resistant materials or in systems and control and this is an issue for the school to address. Standards in these aspects of design and technology fall below the national average by Year 11 and they are too low due to weaknesses in the teaching of these aspects of design and technology and weaknesses in the management of these curriculum areas. In religious education, standards are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus by Year 9 and this reflects an improvement in standards since the time of the previous inspection. For the few Year 11 students following a GCSE course in religious education, standards are above the national average but, as the vast majority of Year 11 students do not follow a programme of study based on the locally agreed syllabus or a GCSE course, no judgement can be reached on standards attained for them; this is a most unsatisfactory situation as religious education is a statutory subject for all Year 11 students. The school has not made enough progress in raising the position of religious education in the curriculum for students in Years 10 and 11; even allowing for some difficulties in recruiting a specialist religious education teacher not enough has been done to improve this situation from the time of the last inspection.

7. Students with SEN make good progress and so achieve good standards measured against their prior attainment. Support for students with challenging behaviour related to their special educational needs is good and as a consequence a proportion of these students are beginning to manage their own behaviour reasonably well for most of the time and this is having a positive impact on their gains in learning and in turn on the standards they achieve. Students with EAL make very good progress and their achievement is very good. This is because the leadership and management of the provision for students with EAL are excellent. The majority of minority ethnic students who are fluent in English achieve high standards measured against their prior attainment. The robust monitoring of their achievement over time and the use of data to set targets for their improvement make a very valuable contribution to their very good achievement. Children in public care achieve high enough standards as do the very few Traveller students. Students identified as gifted and talented make good progress and achieve good standards by Year 9 and very good progress by Year 11 and so achieve very good standards by the age of 16. However, many subject areas are at an early stage of planning to better meet the needs of gifted and talented students and the gifted and talented policy has yet to be ratified by the full governing body.
8. Because literacy is so well managed across Years 7 to 9 students make very good gains in developing their speaking and listening skills across most subjects. Because of their literacy training most subject teachers are developing a reading culture and they also focus on supporting students in Years 7 to 9 with their writing and so, in most subjects, students aged 11 to 14 make at least good progress in reading and writing. The numeracy strategy is not yet so well developed across subjects but students nonetheless make at least satisfactory progress in their development of important numeracy skills across the subjects they study and by Year 9 standards in numeracy are average. The ICT and science strands of the Key Stage 3 Strategy are at a much earlier stage of development and have not yet had a significant impact across subjects on standards by Year 9.

Sixth form

9. Because no national comparative data has been published for the year 2002 AS- and A-level standards within the school cannot be benchmarked against national comparative data for that year. Comparisons can be made with the national picture in 2001 but, by the time this report is published, that information will be almost two years out of date. In 2001, evidence indicated results at A-level biology and business studies were in line with the national average. Vocational business studies was above the national average. Mathematics at AS-level was in line with the national average in 2001. Other subjects in 2001 benchmarked below the national average with the worst results in A-level economics. Overall A-level results were well below the national average in 2001. Although the data cannot be benchmarked, economics results improved very significantly in 2002. In 2002, students achieved above their target grades in ICT, A-level law and A-level economics.

10. Inspectors note good and very good achievement in biology, chemistry, physics, AVCE science, economics, ICT, art, media studies, history and French. Value added measures used by the school indicate that in most sixth form subjects students make very good progress and achieve high and very high standards measured against their prior attainment. The inspection team supports the findings from the school's own self-evaluation. Standards of achievement for most sixth form students in most subjects are very good because of the very good and excellent teaching they receive. Standards of work seen are in line with national expectations in AS- and A-level mathematics, biology and chemistry and close to the national average in physics. In AVCE science, standards are below the national average, but achievement is very good. For most students standards in design and technology are broadly average but standards are better in Year 12 than in Year 13. Standards seen in business studies are below average. Standards seen in economics are well above average and standards by Year 13 in ICT are above average. Achievement in art is very good because of the excellent teaching and the standards seen are above the national average. In drama, achievement is good but standards attained are below average because of the students' prior attainment. In media studies the standard of work seen was average in Year 12 and above average in Year 13. Standards of achievement in history and English are very good but attainment falls below the national average. The few students following an AS-level course in French attain standards in line with the national average. Judgements on standards in law, psychology and sociology cannot be made because these subjects were not inspected.

Students' attitudes, values and personal development

11. The attitudes of students towards school are very good. They are keen to learn and the majority value education highly. Most demonstrate a very good work ethic and determination to succeed. They are able to sustain their concentration well and persevere with difficult tasks when their attention is engaged through very good teaching. On the few occasions where students' attitudes to learning were less than satisfactory teachers usually failed to stimulate them into wanting to learn. On these rare occasions students showed disinterest in the subject, failed to participate in the lesson and, on occasions, hindered the learning of others. Relationships between students and with staff are very good. The mutual respect evident between the majority of teachers and students is outstandingly good. Teaching staff value students for their individuality and help them to achieve their potential in as many ways as possible. Students respond positively to this and develop during their time at school into confident young people. They are happy to approach members of staff if they are experiencing difficulties with their academic work or if they have personal problems. They collaborate

very well in group-work activities and so the development of their social skills is very good. Students are encouraged, through debate, to express their feelings on a wide range of moral and social issues. They are tolerant of the views and opinions of their peer group that may differ from their own.

12. The standard of behaviour within the school is good. The school is a socially harmonious community. Behaviour in lessons was rarely less than satisfactory and in some lessons very good to excellent. In a small number of lessons, however, behaviour was considered less than satisfactory. This was often related to a weakness in the standard of teaching. A small number of students have challenging behaviour and, on occasions, they disrupt the course of the lesson and the learning of others. Behaviour outside of lessons was often noisy and boisterous, with a lack of courtesy to others sometimes evident. This was exacerbated by the narrow corridors when students were moving between lessons, particularly when they all emerged from classrooms at the same time.
13. During the academic year 2001 to 2002 there were 127 fixed-term exclusions involving 72 students. Eight students were permanently excluded. Compared with the previous year, though the number of fixed-term exclusions remains the same, the number of students involved has reduced. Exclusion data is analysed by ethnicity and gender. The data indicates that Black students and those of dual heritage are excluded more frequently than other groups and this data is used to inform strategies aimed at reducing the number of exclusions amongst these ethnic groups. This information is used to provide additional support and resources such as the setting up of the Social Support Base. This Base is having a positive effect on the standard of behaviour of some students. The procedures used as an alternative to exclusion are helping more students to stay in school. The school has a real commitment to the inclusion of all of its students. Exclusion is only resorted to when all other strategies have failed. The governing body is appropriately involved with permanent exclusions.
14. Students state that bullying is unacceptable within the school and, when reported to staff, is always effectively dealt with. The ethos of the school encourages students to accept responsibility for their actions, and treat everyone with respect. The majority of students respond to this. Race relations within the school are excellent.
15. The development of students' initiative and personal responsibility is good. By the time they reach the end of Year 11 most students are confident and articulate young people who are able to express their feelings and concerns in a logical manner. The school council provides an effective forum for students to air their views. Their suggestions are taken seriously by the school and they have been instrumental in the introduction of vending machines and producing designs for proposed outside seating areas. Year 11 prefects are paired up with Year 7 tutor groups. Students are active in raising funds in response to disasters such as the Indian earthquake and the floods in Bangladesh.
16. The overall attendance level of students in 2001/2002 was good and above the national average for all schools. Unauthorised absence was below. During the week of the inspection, attendance was lower than normal due to the celebration of Eid by a significant number of students. There are a small number of students who are consistently late arriving for the start of the day despite the school's robust efforts to address this problem.

Sixth form

17. Sixth form students have very good attitudes towards their education. They enjoy their studies, show a serious interest in their work and enjoy being in school. In many lessons, particularly science, media studies and art, their attitudes are excellent. They respond to the high expectations that the sixth form demands of them. They have a high level of attendance. Students have a very positive view of the school. The concerns they expressed about careers and support were judged by inspectors to be unfounded.
18. Relationships between students and teaching staff are very good. They contribute significantly to the ethos of the sixth form and the success students achieve. Sixth form students respond well to opportunities that promote their personal development by using their initiative and accepting personal responsibility. Through work with local primary schools, supporting at a stroke rehabilitation centre and a special school, students are able to share their expertise and caring nature for others. Students also take part in a paired reading scheme with younger students and others design websites and, on occasions, act as tutors to members of the community in developing their computer skills. The school bank is run very effectively by sixth form students.

HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS TAUGHT?

19. Overall the quality of teaching is very good. This overall judgement considers the teaching in the sixth form which is very good overall and includes eleven per cent of excellent teaching. The quality of teaching is good overall in Years 7 to 9 and very good overall in Years 10 and 11. There has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection, especially in Years 10 and 11, and this is a very significant contributory factor to the very good achievement by Year 11 in most subjects. Ninety-three per cent of teaching was at least satisfactory and 70 per cent was at least good. Twenty-nine per cent was at least very good and seven per cent was excellent. The five per cent of unsatisfactory teaching and the two per cent of poor teaching occurred in a few design and technology and geography lessons. Teaching was judged to very good in Years 10 and 11 in English and very good in science throughout the school. Teaching is good in English in Years 7 to 9 and in mathematics throughout the school. Teaching is very good in art and design, French, Spanish and music in Years 10 to 11 and very good in history and discrete ICT lessons throughout the school. It is at least satisfactory overall and often good in all other subjects.
20. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and they know their students very well. Because mathematics teachers have such a good understanding of mathematical processes they are able to explain them carefully and accurately to the students and so the students grasp these processes well and are able to use them to enhance their own learning. In science, teachers have very good subject knowledge and make a very valuable contribution to the students' acquisition of knowledge. Planning is a significant strength in the teaching. Very good planning and brisk pace in timed activities contribute to very good learning in science and art and design. Teachers' awareness of the individual needs of students is very good. For example, an excellent Year 10 art lesson began with a demonstration of how to make a natural shape from two thumb pots. The teacher's awareness of each student's special educational need and EAL stage coupled with excellent support by the EAL teacher in the class ensured that all students understood clearly what to do and so they produced excellent work. Behaviour is skilfully managed in most lessons with a wonderful sense of humour. In history lessons the teachers' very good rapport with students and very well established routines ensure that students know exactly what is expected of them and this contributes to their very

good learning. On the rare occasion when behaviour management is unsatisfactory, as evidenced in a Year 7 music lesson, there is little learning and this adversely affects standards. Where teaching is excellent in music, English, art and design, history, ICT and modern foreign languages teachers use praise and encouragement to build students' confidence and this in turn inspires them to learn. In a very well planned Year 11 French lesson students responded with enthusiasm to humour which was used effectively by the teacher in the foreign language.

21. Teaching methods are very good in most subjects. In the best English lessons teachers make use of a range of teaching strategies and make learning objectives crystal clear to the students at the beginning of lessons. Most teaching is characterised by a cracking pace, high expectations and challenging activities. Excellent relationships in many lessons also contribute to very good learning. Very good use is made of resources: in a Year 10 English lesson, the teacher made excellent use of an account written by an eight-year-old Japanese boy in order to illustrate the difference between children's writing and adults writing as if they are a child. Students found this to be a fascinating and helpful introduction to their work on the opening of Dicken's *Great Expectations*. Where teaching is unsatisfactory or poor these good features are missing. For example in an unsatisfactory geography lesson the pace was so slow that the students made little progress. Where a number of these factors are lacking, as in some Years 8, 9 and 11 design and technology lessons on systems and control, some students fail to grasp the function of their circuits and they are not able to explain or name the main components within their circuits and this is a most unsatisfactory situation.
22. The teaching of literacy across subjects is good. Teachers are developing a reading culture in their subjects and because of the effective training they have had they make a valuable contribution to the development of students' writing skills across the range of subjects. The teaching of numeracy across subjects is satisfactory. Although the teaching of ICT as a discrete subject is very good, teachers across subjects do not all use ICT effectively to support their teaching. The use of ICT in Years 7 to 9 in design and technology is limited and the use of ICT is not a regular feature of geography lessons. Modern foreign languages do not have sufficient access to ICT facilities. On the other side of the coin very good use is made of ICT to support the teaching of music and so students are able to demonstrate a very high level of composition in 12-tone music using the music computer facilities to good effect.
23. The quality of teaching for students with SEN is good overall. However, in some subject areas, such as religious education, the special educational needs of all students are not always met. Sometimes the support staff lack the skills required to give the support needed and not all teachers in all subjects provide learning opportunities to cater for the wide range of student needs. Staff do not currently have access to a robust SEN policy which spells out clearly that all teachers have the responsibility to plan for students with SEN who are at the school action stage on the register for SEN. The teaching of students with EAL is a major strength of the school because the EAL department is excellent. In a Year 7 English lesson, students with EAL gained access to language used in the *Tempest*, such as 'perfidious', 'prerogative' and 'tribute', because of the outstandingly good teaching. In a mathematics lesson the support teacher used her subject knowledge very effectively to assist a class made up entirely of bilingual students. As a consequence of the high quality support they received the students developed the knowledge and skills required to work out the volume and surface area of cuboids. The quality of teaching for gifted and talented students is good overall. In physical education, gifted and talented students are catered for by extension tasks and the provision of extra-curricular activities.

24. Students' acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding is very good throughout Years 7 to 11 as is their physical and creative effort. Their productivity and pace of learning and their concentration and interest are dependent on the quality of teaching. In a Year 7 science lesson the students were spellbound because of the dynamic and exciting teaching. Excellent relationships in ICT ensure that all students focus and concentrate and this results in very good learning.

Sixth form

25. The quality of teaching and learning in the sixth form is very good overall with a significant proportion of creative and imaginative teaching which is inspirational. Ninety-nine per cent of teaching is at least satisfactory and 88 per cent is at least good. Fifty-four per cent is at least very good and eleven per cent is excellent; this is a high proportion of very good and excellent teaching. This is a noticeably significant improvement on the sixth form teaching observed during the last inspection. Students with SEN receive good support. Excellent teaching was seen in art and chemistry. In biology the teaching provides intellectual stimulus and enables students to make significant gains in acquiring new knowledge and skills. Excellent subject knowledge and very good relationships contribute to very good learning in physics. In a very good Year 12 economics lesson on aggregate supply theory, the underlying theory was suitably explained using a series of relevant diagrams. This detailed explanation effectively built on and extended the students' previous learning. Because students are confident with their teachers they are happy to ask them questions and because their teachers give willingly in their answers the students deepen their understanding of complex issues and concepts. The use of questions by teachers in computing develops students' thinking skills very well. Those students who need them are taught key skills. In art and design quite inspirational teaching means that all students are thoroughly involved in the lesson and so make excellent gains in the skills they require to achieve the highest standards.

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

26. The school is particularly successful at providing an appropriate, wide-ranging curriculum for all students in Years 7 to 11 and the sixth form. Equality of access and opportunity for all age groups within the school are excellent. Since the last inspection, many initiatives have been designed to make it easier for all students to make the best of subjects offered and improve the standards of their work. The school provides an appropriate and flexible curriculum for many different social and cultural groups. The breadth of provision outside lessons, at lunchtimes and after school, is also very good. A variety of weekly clubs, activities and study sessions are held and the provision for physical education is very good. Four intensive revision courses are run during the holidays at strategic times during the school year for students in the sixth form and Year 11, promoting higher attainment in public examinations. The contribution of the community to students' learning is very good. Arrangements for the teaching of literacy skills are very effective.
27. The school has been successful in developing the curriculum so that it meets national requirements and is responsive to local circumstances. However, as at the time of the last inspection, religious education is not taught to all students in Years 10 and 11 and consequently the school's curriculum at this level does not meet statutory requirements. Neither religious education nor sport are provided for sixth form students.

28. The implementation of the numeracy strategy is satisfactory. Implementation of the literacy strategy is good and has impacted on raising standards in writing, reading, speaking and listening across subjects.
29. Students with EAL have equality of access to the full curriculum on offer in the school. The school ensures that students with EAL who arrive towards the end of their secondary education leave with some qualifications. Students with EAL are encouraged to take examinations in their first language, for example Urdu, Panjabi and Bengali. Provision for equality of access to the curriculum and for full inclusion for students with SEN is good.
30. Provision for students' personal, social and health education, including sex education and drugs education, are good. Form tutors teach the course, with specialist support when required. Materials and schemes of work are good and the course is well taught. This dimension of the curriculum is further enhanced by the availability of professional counsellors in school every Friday morning and lunchtime. The provision made for citizenship is satisfactory.
31. The curriculum for Years 7 to 9 is good and is broad and balanced. It is particularly effective for English and drama, areas in which students' social skills are developed in a planned and active way. Most subjects are taught in classes of mixed ability and students' progress is carefully tracked to ensure they make the best of their potential. The discrete ICT course at this level is good and represents an improvement on the situation at the time of the last inspection. However, some subjects still provide insufficient opportunity for the development of skills in ICT within their own areas.
32. The quality and range of learning opportunities in Years 10 and 11 are very good with a wide range of courses, catering for a variety of needs. When students in Year 9 make their choices of subjects, the school provides them with considerable flexibility and the curriculum at this level has many strengths. The discrete ICT course is excellent and produces outstanding results. A range of courses in business and economics, including a vocational course, meets the needs and aspirations of all the students who opt to take these courses. The English department enters all students for both English language and English literature and organises regular sessions in the library. The history course establishes a framework for the study of the twentieth century. The modern foreign languages department provides examination courses in five languages, including three which are spoken locally.
33. No provision has been made in Years 10 and 11 for students to follow work-related courses. However, careers education at all levels within the school is good. A new curriculum team leader is in post and many new developments have taken place or are planned. A new careers library has been created, visits from a theatre company are organised to promote students' thinking about future possibilities and displays throughout the school highlight opportunities. A partnership with South Bank University has given students at the school the opportunity to work with a student on a careers advisors' diploma course. The Connexions service has started to make an impression on the school and an interview room has been prepared so that students can benefit from the weekly visits of the personal adviser. Plans for curriculum development include appropriately timed careers provision for students in Years 8 to 11 and an improved service in the sixth form.
34. The school was granted technology college status in 1995. A number of post-16 courses reflect this enhanced status for technology, particularly in science and ICT. However, design and technology courses, both in the sixth form and in the main school,

are conventional and often fail to demonstrate a high technology ethos. In science and ICT, aspects such as equal opportunities and access for all students are very good. Some of these are good in design and technology, but there is underachievement in some examination courses, particularly in systems and control and resistant materials.

35. Good use is made of the community to support the work of the classroom. Strong links with the Education Business Partnership provide a range of enrichment opportunities for students. For example, the Education Business Partnership provides study skills training for students in Year 9. Effective links with industry support the Technology Challenge Days which the school runs in conjunction with other secondary schools. Students in the lower school provide Christmas parcels for senior citizens. Good use is made of the school buildings out of school hours by the local community.
36. The provision for students' personal development, including spiritual, moral and cultural development, is good and is an improvement since the last inspection when there were very few opportunities for students' spiritual development.
37. Provision for spiritual development is good. The school has a thorough spirituality policy to promote spiritual development across all curriculum areas and these opportunities are well defined. There is good provision for exploring spirituality and many departments provide good opportunities for students to experience and reflect on issues of meaning and value, for instance, in religious education, modern foreign languages, drama, English, history, physical education, music, English as an additional language and art and design. For example, in religious education lessons on Karma in Hinduism and the four noble truths in Buddhism, students were given the opportunities to reflect on their beliefs. Students study spiritual aspects of major world religions. Very good opportunities are provided in music, physical education and art and design and students are encouraged to appreciate their emotions through studying these subjects. This represents good progress in the provision for students' spiritual development since the last inspection but the school still fails to provide a daily act of collective worship which is broadly/mainly Christian in accordance with the requirement of the Education Reform Act 1988. No request has been made by the school for a 'Determination', either for the whole student body or for a particular group of students. However, a room is set aside for Muslim students to pray.
38. Provision for moral development is very good and so students behave well and respect others. There are many opportunities in lessons across the curriculum to consider questions of right and wrong. Moral issues are planned and delivered through the weekly assemblies; good examples were seen on the issues of being fair, taking care of others and valuing personal differences. The good support in assemblies and registration time makes an important contribution to students' moral development. Moral issues are effectively addressed in lessons. Questions, such as 'Should sport be separated from politics?' and issues, such as whether or not the England cricket team should go to Zimbabwe to play, are explored with interest. Students are presented with opportunities to explore racism as part of their citizenship programme. The issue as to whether or not abortion is murder provides students with valuable opportunities to think and reflect on a day-to-day concern which is relevant and so increases their understanding and maturity.
39. Provision for social development is also good and is fostered through the many opportunities that students have for taking responsibility and exercising personal initiatives. Students are given a good appreciation of social issues in religious education and also in geography where social and economic issues affecting Brazil, France and the UK in a wider context are discussed in depth. There are many good opportunities to

participate in clubs and societies during and after school. The library is a very valuable resource and makes a valuable contribution to students' personal development. Students are encouraged to work together in pairs and small groups in all curriculum areas. Good provision has been made for students with EAL providing them with many opportunities for support with their homework through the homework club and lunchtime club and access is provided to the Internet for these students which results in them developing their language and becoming confident and independent learners.

40. There is good provision for the cultural development of students. The school celebrates the wide range of cultures within the school. Students have a good awareness of different cultures and are tolerant of different beliefs and ethnic groups. Cultural development is encouraged through theatre visits in drama and dance from different cultures in physical education. In an English lesson seen students were given the opportunity to appreciate culture and diversity as portrayed by Shakespeare. Work in art and design makes a good contribution and students study more traditional aspects of culture. The school has celebrated the Black history month and examples of work seen on identity and life stories of Black role models provide good opportunities for the cultural development of students. Students are provided with opportunities to explore cultural diversity in modern Britain and, through the study of community languages, they explore Asian literature and their teachers are excellent Asian role models. Opportunities are provided for students to explore and celebrate their own cultural backgrounds and during the inspection the school was very supportive to students and teachers who needed to be away to celebrate Eid. However, there is no formal planned programme of visits to the local mandir or gurdwara and the school recognises this as an important area for development.

Sixth form

41. The sixth form curriculum is very good, providing a secure environment for learning and courses for every level of ability. Students are given much support before they join the sixth form in order to ensure that their choices are suitable. Several subject areas have introduced courses at a basic, as well as advanced, level in order that students with lower prior attainment can gain access to sixth form study. The variety of curricular options available in ICT is excellent. The science department has courses at a variety of levels, ranging from the AVCE course to strong provision in A-level biology, chemistry and physics. The AVCE course is very good; students are keen, have been on work experience and are developing the skills of independent learning. Courses in business and economics are also very good with a range of provision from AVCE to AS- and A-level examinations in both subjects. Provision in art is very good with good tracking of students' progress. Once they have chosen their courses, the majority of students follow them through to their conclusion; retention rates on most courses are 100 per cent and, of the few courses which lost students last year, none lost more than eleven per cent. The progress of sixth form students is carefully tracked and every student has an individual action plan. Key skills are an integral component of the AVCE and GNVQ courses, but provision for other students is currently under review. One measure of the success of the sixth form curriculum is that in each of the past three years, at least one student has gained a place at Oxford or Cambridge University. Provision for students' personal development in the sixth form is very good; they are given many opportunities to support younger students with reading in a number of subjects as well as opportunities to organise events such as helping elderly citizens in the community with their shopping.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS?

42. The strong leadership and management of this area of the school's work are strengths of the school and make a significant contribution to the very good academic progress that students make. This is a caring school and the very good relationships between staff and students, and its inclusive nature, make a significant contribution towards the high quality of support that students receive.
43. The educational and personal support and guidance that students receive is very good. Very good care is given to the transition of students from primary to secondary school. Very good relationships are established between tutors and their groups. Year teams stay together for Years 7 to 11 and a very constructive working partnership between students and tutor is developed over time. Pastoral staff know their students very well. Tutorial time at the beginning of the day is well used to support students' personal development. In Year 7, for example, regular equipment checks reinforce the need for students to prepare in advance for the day's lessons. The Logbook that goes to lessons with students in Years 7 to 9 celebrates achievement as well as logging difficulties. This is an excellent way of monitoring the progress and experiences of the group over the day and provides both heads of year and senior managers with useful information. There is keen competition between tutor groups to win both the weekly and annual award. Pastoral staff in Years 10 and 11 receive information that helps them to identify and monitor students who are underachieving academically. Support systems are in place for these students to raise their performance. All Year 11 students are interviewed by a member of the senior management team as part of their preparation for GCSE examinations.
44. Careers education prepares students well for making appropriate choices when deciding on which subjects to study at GCSE, further education or the world of work. The personal, social and health education that students receive effectively supports their personal development.
45. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are good. Attendance is recorded manually in registers. A database helps the school to monitor attendance. Monitoring of attendance is given high priority by pastoral staff. Rewards are given for high levels of attendance as well as improved attendance. Good working relationships with the education welfare service support the school with students whose attendance is a cause for concern.
46. The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good. Students know and understand the standard of what constitutes acceptable behaviour. The merits system is valued by students, particularly those in Years 7 to 9. The system of recording incidents of unacceptable behaviour is very good and heads of year and senior management have an overview of the frequency of these. The early identification of students causing concern enables intervention strategies to be put in place. A range of strategies, such as daily reports and pastoral support plans, are in place to support students who have behavioural difficulties. The recently developed social support base runs a range of support strategies for groups including anger management programmes and programmes to develop appropriate attitudes in lessons. Currently, there is a specific focus on a small number of Year 7 students. The work undertaken by this social support base is aimed at reducing the potential risk of exclusions in the future. The school is not in receipt of additional funding to support this initiative. Students disrupting the learning of others, and failing to respond to teachers' requests, are removed to Extension 17. They continue working under supervision. They discuss with both senior staff and the mentors who work in the base the reasons why they were behaving inappropriately in the lesson. The mentors play a significant role in supporting these students both in Extension 17 and in lessons. The school is working hard to

develop strategies to reduce the number of exclusions amongst Black and dual heritage students.

47. Procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are very good. The ethos of the school promotes mutual respect for all. This is borne out by students who felt that if incidents occurred, the procedures ensured they were effectively dealt with. Incidents of oppressive behaviour are recorded onto a database and monitored by senior staff.
48. The procedures for child protection and ensuring students' welfare are very good. The arrangements for child protection are very good. All staff have received training that raises their awareness of child protection issues. Procedures are in place to monitor the progress of children in public care. There are very good working relationships between the school and staff working for the local authority. The day-to-day care of students, such as first aid arrangements, is good. A range of healthy food is provided for students at lunchtimes including a vegetarian option. However, the school has made no provision for halal meat to be served on occasions in respect for the cultural beliefs of a large proportion of its students. Health and safety procedures are satisfactory. There are sufficient systems in place to monitor and record the effectiveness of this area of the school's work. A few minor concerns were brought to the attention of the school management some of which they have already actioned.

Assessment

49. Procedures for assessing students' attainment and progress are very good. Arrangements are very thorough for students entering the school, based on the transfer information from partner primary schools and a wide range of assessments made at the beginning of Year 7. The assessment co-ordinators provide subject areas with a wealth of data. Very effective use is made of this information to guide students into appropriate teaching groups and to make early identification of those needing support, because of language and other specific learning difficulties. Test results and results of formal assessments are centrally held on computer; they are easily accessible and form the basis for value-added judgements across Years 7 to 9 and Years 10 to 11. The whole-school system for tracking students' progress, through very thorough target setting and monitoring, provides a very good overview of how well individual students are progressing. Subject staff, form tutors, students and parents are involved in the process, particularly through reviews, interviews and report evenings. Early in the school year subject leaders are required to produce a report on the latest GCSE examination results. This includes evaluation by ethnicity and gender and of all different groups of students. Subject areas submit their proposed strategies for further improvement. Students' work is assessed regularly and procedures are particularly well developed within science, English and music; students are provided with clear indications of how they are attaining against assessment criteria. Teachers, generally, are good at providing comments that help students to improve their work. The foundation subjects use their own baseline testing of students, very early in Year 7; data is used well to judge the value-added factor at the end of Years 9 and 11.
50. Assessment information, overall, is used well in most subjects to guide curricular planning. For example, in physical education, schemes of work are being updated as a result of data analysis. The high level of awareness of subject staff about students in the early stages of learning English enables them to take good account of this in their lesson planning. Assessment data on students with SEN is not always used consistently across all subjects to support these students and on rare occasions this has an adverse affect on their learning. Subject areas use data on students'

performance at the end of Year 9 to set targets in terms of a predicted grade and to enter students on examination courses at levels appropriate to their ability. Good use is made of information for tracking the progress of individuals, as in English and science. Very good improvement overall has been made since the last inspection, when assessment was deemed to be satisfactory. The success of the school's assessment procedures is reflected in its national recognition for the value-added factor.

Sixth form

Advice, support and guidance

51. The provision for educational guidance is very good overall. The school provides very effectively for the needs of its sixth-formers and helps them to become successful and responsible young adults. Students who intend to join the sixth form are provided with all the information necessary to make an informed choice about what to study. All students are interviewed by a member of senior management before entering the sixth form to ensure they will be successful in the courses they have chosen.
52. The head of sixth form is very experienced and provides strong leadership for his team of tutors. Students are provided with very good personal support and advice throughout their time in the sixth form. Tutors have a good knowledge of sixth form issues and are effective in discussing with students academic performance or personal problems based on regular monitoring of their work and attendance. The sixth form team of tutors knows their students very well. At the end of Year 12, before embarking on further studies, students' performance is discussed and, if appropriate, alternative courses suggested ensuring students' ultimate success. The majority of students have been allocated a mentor, who is not their subject teacher or tutor, for additional personal support and this support works very effectively in helping the students with their learning.
53. A careers education and guidance programme ensures that students are well prepared for either higher education or the world of work. Visits to higher education establishments raise students' aspirations. Several students each year regularly attend the Oxford and Cambridge University shadowing schemes and have been successful in gaining places at these universities. All students applying for places at competitive universities such as Oxbridge, Imperial College and London School of Economics are offered individual and small-group training to help them prepare for interviews. Students are supported in the preparation of both electronic and paper applications to university clearing. Connexions personal advisors work with students who are going into paid employment.

Assessment

54. The procedures for assessing students' attainment and progress in the sixth form are very good and make positive contributions to their achievement. The school makes a thorough analysis of students' prior GCSE performance and other assessment data to estimate predicted grades. This information is used well in a high proportion of subjects. Targets are set, monitored and discussed with students in order to raise expectations. Academic and pastoral reviews provide opportunities for students to evaluate and discuss their progress; each A-level student has a personal mentor and these mentors provide valuable support to the A-level students. Students' work is marked regularly and provides good feedback that helps them to improve their work. ICT and biology are particularly good at relating marking to examination grades. Assessment data is used, when appropriate, to change examination boards; for

example, in English, physics and media studies, in order to have less bias towards English text. Information provided by assessment procedures is sometimes used to re-route students at the end of Year 12 to more suitable, vocationally aimed courses.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

55. The parents' views of the quality and effectiveness of what the school provides and achieves are good. Twenty-six parents attended the meeting prior to the inspection and ten per cent of parents completed the questionnaire on parents' views. Three interpreters, Urdu, Bengali and Albanian, were present at the meeting.
56. The parents who responded to the questionnaire and attended the meeting felt their children were happy at school, were expected to work hard and were making good progress. The concerns they expressed were about the information they received about their children's progress, the ability of the school to work closely with its parents and the range of activities out of school hours.
57. Inspectors agreed with parents' positive comments. They considered that the information parents receive is good. The school works hard to involve parents when difficulties arise. The range of out-of-school-hours activities is very good.
58. The quality of information provided for parents, particularly about the progress of their children, is good. Parents receive a target action card and an annual report each year. However, the quality of annual reports is inconsistent. These reports do not always ensure that parents can see what their children have studied, what they have learned and what they need to do to improve their work further. Target action cards show how students are achieving but comments again vary in quality about how students can improve their work. Parents are encouraged to contact the school if they have any concerns. A range of letters is sent home to parents when difficulties arise about such issues as attendance or behaviour as well as letters of congratulation when students have achieved well. The newsletter keeps parents informed about the daily life of the school and its achievements. The school says that there is no longer a need to translate these documents into other languages.
59. Finance from the Technology College funding has been used to set up literacy and numeracy courses for Year 7 parents to give them the expertise to support their children's education. Parents' consultation evenings are well supported. Attendance is often over 90 per cent. Evenings for parents on how to help their children prepare for GCSE, or information on drugs, are also held. Interpreters are available at these evenings and at other times when required.
60. The contribution of parents to their children's learning is very good. The school prides itself on the strengths of its links with parents. Parents have a personal interview before their children start school when they sign the home-school agreement. Similarly, parents are required to sign an agreement between home, school and student when their children enter the sixth form. These agreements are rigorously enforced by the school and the majority of parents abide by them. This means that effective partnerships with parents are established when difficulties arise. This is a contributory factor to the rising levels of academic success students are achieving. Currently the school has difficulty in recruiting parent governors.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

61. The leadership of the headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team is excellent. They have successfully created an all inclusive culture where the focus is on the success of all students. Together they have made extremely effective strategic decisions, for example in positioning and supporting the EAL department so that it is central to raising standards. This strategy has resulted in the school being positioned very high up in the ranking in the recently published national value-added league table. Leadership at middle management is very good overall. Curriculum leadership ranges from excellent in English, ICT and EAL to unsatisfactory in design and technology and religious education. The leadership of the heads of year is also very good.
62. The school's aims and values are excellent. Equality of opportunity for all is an outstanding feature of this very successful school. An environment has been created where it is safe for students to make mistakes and to learn from them. The staff are creative and successful in building the confidence and self-esteem of the students and this strategy combined with robust action planning results in very good achievement for the students.
63. Management is very good. Very effective management systems are in place and channels of communication are clear and this is a significant improvement from what was judged to be the case at the time of the previous inspection. Senior managers and almost all middle managers carry out their duties very effectively. The headteacher successfully delegates very significant responsibilities to her senior and middle managers and empowers them so that they succeed. However, she keeps a very careful eye on how her team is performing and all are held to account for their actions.
64. The monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance are very good. Each curriculum team leader has a focused interview with her/his line manager (each member of the senior leadership team has a number of subject areas to line manage) about the examination results in her/his subject and where appropriate robust targets are set for improvement and incorporated in departmental development plans. In addition, there are regular performance management reviews between the headteacher, curriculum team leaders and the appropriate line manager on the senior leadership team. The headteacher knows exactly what is going on in her school and deploys her senior managers very effectively to ensure that she has the complete picture of the strengths and the areas in need of improvement. Curriculum teams are involved in self-review and this has led to improvements in the quality of teaching and learning in almost all subjects but this practice is not yet consistent across all curriculum areas. Opportunities for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and modeling good practice are not so effective in design and technology as in other subjects. Heads of year, under the leadership of their senior line manager, monitor and evaluate the school's provision to meet the pastoral needs of all students. They work very effectively in partnership with the head of social support and the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO). Students who are disaffected and so at risk of exclusion are monitored very effectively and the provision for them is very good. The effective teamwork of the key senior manager, the head of social support and the SENCO has successfully enabled a number of students with very challenging behaviour to be fully included in all aspects of school life. For those who require it, counselling is very well managed by the school. Inspectors judged the quality of pastoral support plans to be excellent. The monitoring of minority ethnic achievement is very robust and results in raised achievement for minority ethnic students because information gained from this analysis is used very effectively to improve the quality of the educational provision for these students. Provision for and outcomes in community languages are excellent. Every effort has been made by the headteacher to recruit high calibre minority ethnic staff to reflect the student body and she has been successful in

recruiting and retaining a number of excellent teachers from minority ethnic backgrounds.

65. The management of SEN is good. The SEN policy is currently under review. A member of the senior leadership team is 'au fait' with the changes required as a result of the recent SEN and Disability Act (which received Royal Assent on May 11th 2001 – to be implemented over 15 months) and the separate Code of Practice for SEN, but at the time of the inspection a policy incorporating these changes had not yet been ratified by the governing body. The revised Code of Practice for SEN and the separate 'SEN Toolkit' were meant to be implemented from 1st January 2002 and so the school has had 13 months in which to review and revise its SEN policy. The leadership and management of the provision for students with EAL are excellent. The management of disaffected students at risk of exclusion is very good. There is a draft policy for gifted and talented students but it has not yet been seen by the whole governing body. There are not yet robust plans in place in each department for gifted and talented students and initiatives for them are at an early stage of development.
66. Strategic thinking and planning are very good. The priorities identified by the school focus on student outcomes. The school has been incredibly successful in achieving amazingly good outcomes for its students. The 'planning process' is evidently better than the 'written plan'. However, structures and systems in this exciting school are at the cutting edge when it comes to making a difference to the lives of the students. The senior leadership team is currently reviewing how it should structure the documented plan in the future. Consideration is being given to a radical approach in setting out the documented long-term strategic plan and also the annual school improvement plan. The school improvement plan is very successful as a tool in affecting change and raising standards for the students but as the headteacher openly admits not all staff know what is contained in the documented plan and that is why she wants to change the way in which the plan is written so that all staff become involved in the decision making process.
67. The governing body is very supportive and fully embraces the school's vision: 'success for all'. It is not easy to recruit and retain governors and many interviewed during the inspection were fairly new members of the governing body. The school has been successful in recruiting high calibre minority ethnic governors but has a particular difficulty in recruiting and retaining parent/carers governors. The chair of governors is committed to ensuring that every penny of the yearly budget is spent on current students and he is committed to the school fulfilling its vision of 'success for all'. Interviews with the governing body revealed that they are knowledgeable about the work of the school overall. The governing body meets its statutory responsibilities except for providing a daily act of collective worship in accordance with the Education Reform Act 1988, ensuring the provision of religious education for all students in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form in accordance with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and in having a ratified SEN policy in place which meets the requirements of the new Code of Practice for SEN. Minor health and safety infringements have been discussed with the school by inspectors.
68. Financial planning is excellent. All funding available is spent on the current student body to improve the quality of education accessible to it and to raise standards and so the carry forward is negligible. This is a deliberate ploy robustly supported by the chair of governors. Prudent financial planning means that the school's priorities are met and all students, whatever their ability or background, are given the opportunity to succeed by going to Oxbridge if that is for them or taking their place in the world of work after school if that is for them. The finance sub-committee is very effective in monitoring

expenditure and the school is appropriately supported by a bursar. The minor recommendations in the recent auditors report have been acted upon. The application of the principles of best value is very good. The school receives a range of grants and these are all appropriately targeted in the interests of the students for whom they are intended. The funding allocated to support students with SEN is generously supplemented from the school's general budget and used effectively to support students with SEN.

69. Teachers, learning support assistants (LSAs), administrative staff and site management staff are very effectively and efficiently deployed. They all make a very valuable contribution to the learning of the students in the widest sense of the word in this community school. They know all about the students and this is a very valuable asset in a school which serves a community facing challenging circumstances. Taking into account the overall very good quality of teaching and learning, the very good achievement, good behaviour overall in a school which has some students with some very challenging behaviour and who come from very disadvantaged backgrounds, and the significant improvement in the spiritual development of students since the previous inspection the school provides very good value for money. This is a very significant improvement since the last inspection.
70. The school, like many in the London boroughs, has faced difficulties in attracting new staff to the school. However, there is a good match of specialist staff to meet the demands of the school curriculum. Only a few classes are taught by non-specialists, particularly in science and religious education. Whilst there are a number of staff involved in teaching ICT who are not specialists, this does not appear to adversely affect the learning. The school has made effective use of unqualified teachers, particularly in community languages, to fill vacancies. Some temporary staff have been appointed to fill vacancies until a permanent specialist teacher can be found. The school has struggled to fill vacancies in design and technology showing up some weaknesses in this area.
71. There is very good provision for the induction and development of newly qualified teachers. The school recognises that more support is needed for experienced teachers new to the school, especially those who join after the start of the academic year. The school works in collaboration with a number of initial teacher training (ITT) providers and has been successfully involved with the overseas trained teacher (OTT) programme and the graduate teacher programme (GTP).
72. There is a very good performance management policy that places people at the centre of activities. Plans are underway to extend the performance management process to include all staff. Staff are supported in their development and the school has responded well to individual and whole-school training needs. The school has Investor in People status. However, some weaknesses were recognised in the training of language teachers in the use of ICT.
73. Accommodation overall is satisfactory. The school has done all it can to maintain and improve on the original poor quality of the premises. The classrooms are mostly good, although the fabric is insufficiently robust. Exceptions to this are the huts used for teaching business studies, which are dilapidated and uninspiring areas in which to work. The music rooms are not soundproof and this inhibits teaching and learning. The drama studio has no curtains or performance lighting and the hall is a dimly lit area with a floor that does not encourage close contact. Apart from the sixth form building, there are insufficient toilet facilities, particularly for boys, and most facilities, for male and female alike, are unsightly and characterised by broken tiles and broken pipes. The

facilities for eating at lunchtime for students are insufficient for the numbers taking school meals. Students towards the end of the queue have to choose between eating and being late to afternoon lessons or not eating, which is unacceptable, especially considering the numbers entitled to free school meals. The external areas of the school are unsatisfactory. A major part of the playing field is unfit for use and some of the pathways between the buildings do not drain in wet weather. The field to the side of the school is an asset rendered unusable by the volume of illegal fly tipping that has occurred in recent years. Two unsightly commercial containers provide much needed storage space for the physical education department to compensate for the lack of suitable space within the main buildings. The flat roofs leak despite recent refurbishment and have become a constant drain on expenditure. The learning resource centre is welcoming and provides very good accommodation to extend students' learning and they appreciate the facilities it offers.

74. Learning resources are satisfactory overall. Learning resources are well used in most respects. Departments generally have sufficient text books. The library is well stocked with modern books, multi-lingual resources, differentiated resources and has good ICT facilities. ICT resources are very good in the ICT teaching rooms and in some departments, although some, such as music, have older computers which do not run modern software well. The library is well used by students.

Sixth form

Leadership and management

75. Leadership of the sixth form is excellent. The head of sixth form is charismatic and he successfully inspires all students to believe in themselves, to adopt the 'Can Do' philosophy of the school, and so to succeed. Management of the sixth form is very good. Performance and trends are regularly reviewed to inform decisions on where to place resources but currently a few very small classes in a couple of subjects are allowed to run as part of the vision to provide a curriculum with breadth but as recognised by the school this philosophy needs to be scrupulously monitored in terms of cost effectiveness. Curriculum team leaders monitor the sixth form subject/course provision for which they are responsible and there is detailed and robust dialogue with the head of sixth form. Consultation with students is very good; each student is treated as an individual and the head of sixth form knows each one, 'warts and all'. Management structures and systems provide formal channels to enable the sixth form students to express their concerns about school life: there is a sixth form committee democratically elected and sixth form students are also represented on the school council. They are not as yet invited to be observers at governing body meetings. However, all students interviewed did not agree with the negative return in the student questionnaire which indicated that they were not listened to sensitively. Inspectors judged that there are sufficient forums and individual support systems to ensure that they are listened to very sensitively. The academic tutor system works very effectively but one student about to launch out into the world of work argued that this worked much better for students planning to go on to university but he did not consider that he was let down because the head of the sixth form asked him almost on a daily basis: 'how is it going?'

Resources

76. There is an adequate level of resources for the sixth form. There is good provision in the library for books to support post-16 courses. The students greatly value the expertise of the members of staff who run the learning resource base. There are

weaknesses in the sixth form accommodation but they do not prevent a wide range of interesting and exciting courses from being taught very well. Students have been provided with a good common room which is used well to ‘grab’ the odd moment of relaxation.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

77. The governors, headteacher and senior leadership team should give attention to the following points to improve the quality of education provided and raise standards for all students.
- i) Ensure that all students in Years 10 and 11 receive their statutory entitlement to religious education in accordance with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. *(Paragraphs: 6, 27, 61, 67, 169 and 174).*
 - ii) Improve the provision for and raise standards in graphics and systems and control and resistant materials in design and technology by improving the quality of leadership and management of this curriculum area within the school. *(Paragraphs: 6, 21, 61, 122, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129 and 130).*
 - iii) Continue to increase and improve the use of ICT to support the teaching of all subjects across the curriculum. *(Paragraphs: 8, 22, 31, 102, 116, 131, 135, 142, 147, 148, 149, 154, 155, 163, 164, 166 and 172).*
 - iv) Continue to improve the quality and amount of accommodation, particularly the hatted accommodation. *(Paragraphs: 73, 132 and 160).*

Sixth form

- i) Further enhance the very good sixth form curriculum by providing recreational sports-related courses. *(Paragraph 27).*
- ii) Increase class sizes by recruiting more students in design and technology. *(Paragraphs: 75 and 201).*
- iii) Continue to improve the amount and quality of the accommodation used for teaching in the sixth form. *(Paragraphs: 73, 132, 196 and 210).*

In addition to the key issues above, the following minor issue should also be included in the governors’ action plan:

- Ensure that a SEN policy covering the requirements in the new Code of Practice for SEN is ratified by the governing body. *(Paragraphs: 23, 65 and 67).*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 7 to 11	168
	Sixth form	56

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
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Years 7 - 11

Number	12	35	70	39	9	3	0
Percentage	7	21	42	23	5	2	0

Sixth form

Number	6	24	19	6	1	0	0
Percentage	11	43	34	11	1	0	0

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

Information about the school's students**Students on the school's roll**

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of students on the school's roll	1205	309
Number of full-time students known to be eligible for free school meals	491	88

Special educational needs

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of students with statements of special educational needs	26	1
Number of students on the school's special educational needs register	346	10

English as an additional language

	No of students
Number of students with English as an additional language	1316

Student mobility in the last school year

	No of students
Students who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	76
Students who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	61

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.8
National comparative data	7.8

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4
National comparative data	1.2

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 (Year 9)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered students in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2002	121	115	236

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	54	73	61
	Girls	77	71	57
	Total	131	144	118
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	School	56 (51)	61 (63)	50 (53)
	National	66 (64)	67 (66)	66 (66)
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	School	10 (11)	36 (38)	14 (17)
	National	32 (31)	45 (43)	33 (34)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	37	78	54
	Girls	66	84	57
	Total	103	162	111
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	School	44 (42)	69 (62)	48 (58)
	National	67 (65)	70 (68)	67 (64)
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	School	14 (12)	41 (30)	23 (20)
	National	32 (31)	44 (42)	34 (33)

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

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

Number of registered students in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	117	108	225

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of students achieving the standard specified	Boys	54	117	117
	Girls	65	106	108
	Total	119	223	225
Percentage of students achieving the standard specified	School	53 (51)	99 (97)	100 (99)
	National	50 (48)	91 (91)	96 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per student	School	42.4
	National	39.8

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

Vocational qualifications	Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those students who achieved all those they studied	School	94
	National	n/k

n/k = not known

Attainment at the end of the sixth form (Year 13)

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS / Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Boys	Girls	All
School	Number of candidates	40	60	90
	Average point score per candidate	14.0	12.4	14.5
National	Average point score per candidate	n/k	n/k	n/k

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS examinations			For candidates entered for Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Boys	Girls	All	Boys	Girls	All
School	Number of candidates	29	37	66	11	13	24
	Average point score per candidate	13.2	15.5	14.5	16	13.2	14.5
National	Average point score per candidate	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k

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

International Baccalaureate		Number	% success rate
Number entered for the International Baccalaureate Diploma and the percentage of those students who achieved all they studied	School	n/a	n/a
	National		n/a

n/k = not known
n/a = not applicable

Ethnic background of students

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 students on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
94	9	3
2	1	0
89	21	0
18	12	0
1	0	0
4	0	0
3	4	0
407	4	0
460	17	1
149	2	2
40	2	0
64	18	1
181	37	1
0	0	0
2	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	86.98
Number of students per qualified teacher	17.8

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	22
Total aggregate hours worked per week	584

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	70.8
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	27.34
Key Stage 4	22.8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	5,306,987.
Total expenditure	5,300,443
Expenditure per student	3,510.23
Balance brought forward from previous year	138,882
Balance carried forward to next year	6,544

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	39
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	44

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	6
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	3
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1122
Number of questionnaires returned	117

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	50	44	4	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	46	44	4	3	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	38	45	13	3	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	44	38	12	6	1
The teaching is good.	38	48	7	2	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	38	41	15	5	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	39	41	7	5	8
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	36	4	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	27	44	23	2	3
The school is well led and managed.	34	41	11	4	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	44	38	10	1	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	31	33	15	6	15

Not all horizontal columns add up to 100 per cent because some parents return questionnaires with some questions left unanswered.

Other issues raised by parents

Parents praised the openness of the teachers whom they found to be very approachable and always available. They considered this to be a very happy school which focuses on the success of every individual student. They thought that the provision for EAL was outstandingly good. Parents considered that the accommodation could be better.

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

ENGLISH (this paragraph includes judgements on drama).

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

Strengths

- Standards are improving in all years
- Students' achievement in Years 10 and 11 is very good
- Teachers have high expectations of all students and plan well for their needs
- All students follow the same broad, high-quality curriculum
- Excellent leadership and management provide clear direction and vision

Areas for development

- Strategies which lead to more very good teaching in Years 7 to 9

78. Over the past three years, standards at the end of Year 9 have risen in line with those nationally. Although these standards are below national expectations, they are above those attained in schools which take students from similar backgrounds. Students' achievement is good, since their standards on entry to the school are well below average. Boys are closer to the national average for their gender than are girls. The number of students gaining Level 5 and above in national tests in 2002 is similar to that in mathematics and above that in science.
79. Unlike many schools, Loxford enters all students for both English and English literature GCSE examinations. All have gained grades A* - G over the past three years; this is above the national average. The rising trend in both subjects has led to the percentage of students gaining grades A* - C in 2002 being close to the national average. These results represent very good achievement, particularly in English literature.
80. The standards of work seen are below national expectations in reading and writing, but average in speaking and listening by the end of Year 9. Because students are given frequent opportunities for whole-class, group and paired discussion work and also because the more able are very willing to assist those who have difficulties with their spoken English, all make very good progress. By the end of Year 11, most students readily volunteer to read aloud and can use talk to negotiate and solve problems, to make decisions and to refine and extend their ideas through discussion.
81. Standards of reading by the end of Year 9 are below average; however, because of the thorough implementation of the National Literacy Strategy (NLS), a strong reading culture is emerging in the school. Regular reading in lessons and timetabled library sessions are helping all students to value reading, both for enjoyment and to discover information. From Year 7, they read a good range of fiction, poetry, media and non-media texts, as well as play scripts and Shakespeare. Although the deductive and inferential skills of those for whom English is an additional language are often poor when they enter the school, they learn quickly because of the high quality of support which they receive. These students achieve so well that they are all able to gain grades in both English and English literature in GCSE examinations at the end of Year 11.
82. Writing is below average at the end of Year 9 but close to national expectations by the end of Year 11. The department stresses the importance of neat and accurate presentation and encourages all students to develop and use a wide vocabulary. Students are set challenging and interesting tasks which enable them to experience

and explore a variety of written forms, such as diaries, travel writing, magazines, letters and newspapers, and are given many opportunities to write creatively. The lower attaining students in Years 7 to 9 often have a limited vocabulary, inaccurate spelling and difficulty constructing complex sentences. Because they have not yet acquired analytical skills, they have problems responding appropriately to media and literature texts; however, they can write simple and interesting stories, descriptions, letters and diaries. By the end of Year 11, most are able to write to explain and justify opinions as well as describe feelings and thoughts in their personal and creative writing. The most able write fluently and succinctly: they can analyse how writers use language to persuade, by looking at Martin Luther King's rhetoric or a Wordsworth sonnet, for example, and their extended writing is carefully planned, drafted and developed. The best creative work is lively, original and mature, whilst media and literature responses are perceptive and well argued.

83. Students for whom English is an additional language make very good progress because of their teachers' careful planning for individual needs, the high quality of the support they receive from teachers and support assistants, both in and out of the classroom, and the help which is willingly given by their peers. Students with identified special educational needs also make very good progress for similar reasons. Additionally, booster classes and summer and Easter schools give confidence to these students and make a significant contribution to raising their attainment.
84. Drama is taught to all students in Years 7 to 9 and is a GCSE optional subject. Standards in Years 7 to 9 are below average, largely because there is only a single weekly lesson. There are some very gifted students but many, particularly younger boys, see it as a recreational subject, rather than a discipline. Standards at GCSE in 2002 were at the national average and several students did better in drama than in their other subjects. Standards of work seen in Years 10 and 11 are also average. Overall, teaching is good, though there is a tendency for some lessons to be too teacher-led, with not enough responsibility being given to students to make their own interpretations or choose their ways of working. Schemes of work are very good and provide valuable opportunities for the development of students' personal and social skills as well as supplementing themes and texts studied in English, such as *Macbeth* for the national tests in Year 9.
85. Students' learning opportunities are considerably enhanced through a broad curriculum, which includes drama and media studies, and excellent library provision. The department is developing an interesting range of information and communication technology activities for all years and is making a valuable contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness through its newly-written units of planned work. An excellent Year 10 unit deals with the multicultural and moral nature of fairy stories: it encourages students to research international versions of fables and traditions, *Cinderella*, for example, and enables them to make useful links with their work on Oscar Wilde's short stories. A wide range of extra-curricular opportunities, such as theatre visits, reading and book clubs, the Globe Theatre poetry project and the Carnegie 'shadowing', in which students share their book reviews with other schools via the Internet, considerably enrich learning in all years. High quality classroom displays of students' work also help to establish a stimulating and lively learning environment in which success is valued and celebrated.
86. The quality of teaching is good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. Because the most experienced teachers teach in Years 10 and 11, all teaching seen in these years was very good and one lesson was excellent. In the best lessons, teachers use a variety of teaching strategies and make learning objectives clear to students at

the beginning of lessons. They also share their love of English with students and have high expectations of both their behaviour and their achievement: they support and they challenge; they have excellent relationships with their classes and, above all, they make learning rewarding and enjoyable. In a Year 10 lesson, the teacher made excellent use of an account written by an eight-year-old Japanese boy in order to illustrate the difference between children's writing and adults writing as if they are a child. Students found this to be a fascinating and helpful introduction to their work on the opening of Dickens's *Great Expectations*. Half of the lessons in Years 7 to 9 were at least good. In less successful lessons, students' behaviour is not always well managed and opportunities to develop their fuller understanding of texts and language, given the wide cultural background of students, are missed. The endings of some lessons are weak. Students are told what they have done, instead of being asked what they have learned, what they need to do next or what help they still require from their teachers. A strength of all teaching is the very good quality of marking: it is encouraging and thorough; and it helps students to set their own improvement targets as well as giving good guidance on how they can be achieved.

87. The leadership and management of this large English department are excellent. Several staffing problems have recently been overcome and there is now stability on which to build. Seven teachers, four of them newly-qualified, have joined since September. They are already making a significant contribution to the department's success owing to its robust induction system, careful monitoring of teaching, strategies for sharing best classroom practice and excellent support from the senior staff. Communication is very good: self-reviews and evaluations are regularly carried out and planning for improvement is very thorough. This hardworking, well-organised, lively, forward-looking team of teachers has a high sense of commitment and is constantly looking for ways to improve its effectiveness even further. It is set a fine example by the leadership of the head of department.
88. Improvement since the previous inspection is very good. Standards at the end of Year 11 are now close to average and boys have closed the gap on girls in Years 7 to 9. Because of the successful introduction of the National Literacy Strategy, standards of literacy have improved across the school, particularly speaking and reading, and students are also able to tackle extended writing with greater confidence. Additionally, there is a greater proportion of very good teaching, the curriculum is much broader and richer and the leadership and management of the department are now first-class.

Key skills across the curriculum – literacy

89. Students' standards of literacy are average by the end of Year 11. Since they enter the school well below the national average, this indicates that achievement is very good. The National Literacy Strategy has been well implemented and improvements in literacy are now being seen in most subjects.
90. Students quickly make very good progress in speaking, especially those for whom English is an additional language, because teachers plan frequent opportunities for paired and group work and also because good relationships within classes mean that they receive considerable help from other students. Talk is used in many lessons as a valuable tool for developing and extending students' learning. In art and design and drama, for example, they regularly evaluate their own and others' work.
91. The school, strongly supported by the English department, is working hard to establish a reading culture. The well-stocked library and the guidance of the librarian provide excellent support. Because of their literacy training, most teachers are aware of the

need to develop students' reading skills and regularly provide opportunities for them to read to gain information.

92. Again, because of whole-school training, teachers provide good support to help students with their writing. Subject-specific words are displayed in classrooms and teachers ensure that students understand and use them. Many subjects provide question, prompt and structured writing sheets to help students with their extended writing. Those provided by the ICT department are of an excellent quality.
93. Literacy across the curriculum is very well managed. The co-ordinator works closely with the English department, the special educational needs and the English as an additional language departments, to ensure that students' achievement is well monitored. There are progress units and a summer school in Year 7 to help lower attaining students and a number of additional classes and initiatives further up the school. Regular reading opportunities have also been incorporated into morning registration periods. There is, however, inconsistency of practice within some departments, especially associated with the correcting of spelling, grammar and punctuation.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- Standards of attainment in the national examinations are steadily improving
- The achievement of the students in the first three years is very good
- The department is well staffed, with experienced and well-qualified teachers
- The majority of the students have a very good attitude to learning

Areas for improvement

- Providing more opportunities for students to engage with mathematics as a problem solving activity rather than a set of processes
- Increase the use of ICT to support teaching and learning

94. Standards in mathematics by the end of Year 9 are in line with the national average. In the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2002, the proportion of the students attaining the expected Level 5 or above was below the national average. The proportion of those achieving Level 6 was also below average. Relative to schools whose students scored a similar average point score in the corresponding tests at the end of Year 6, the school's results were well above average. Standards have improved steadily over the last four years compared to national norms, although the results declined slightly in 2002, and mathematics results are better than those in science and English. There is no significant difference in the attainment of the boys and the girls.
95. Standards by the end of Year 11 are in line with the average. In the GCSE examinations in 2002, the proportions of students gaining a grade A* - C, and of students gaining grades A* - G were in line with the national average. Seventy-five per cent of the students entered for statistics scored A* - C. Mathematics results have improved over the last five years. However, compared to the results in other subjects, students generally achieve less well in mathematics.
96. Since the last inspection, standards of attainment have improved considerably in all years. From well below the national average, they are now increasingly close to the average. The students' achievement, that is the progress they make in the long term,

has improved in Years 7, 8 and 9, and has been maintained in the other years. The attitude and behaviour of the students continue to be very good, and the quality of the teaching has been maintained. ICT is beginning to be introduced, but the quality of investigational work has declined.

97. In the majority of lessons in Years 7 to 9, the progress that the students make is good overall. In the longer term, it is the very good attitudes of the students and their conscientious application to work which combine with the mainly good teaching to result in very good achievement. Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is good and, in lessons taught by the regular teachers, progress is good, with students responding well to mainly good teaching. In general, students with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language make as good progress as do their peers, supported by smaller classes and good individual help from learning support assistants.
98. Students cover all areas of the curriculum at an appropriate level. Standards in algebra, shape and space and data handling are at an expected level for each set. Standards of numeracy are generally good in higher attaining sets, and are better in Years 7 and 8 than in the other years, but not as good as they should be in the middle and low attaining sets. Many students do not know their multiplication tables fluently enough, and many students are unable to use strategies for working out unusual numerical problems in their heads because they are not given enough opportunities to practice. Understanding of fractional number systems is not as good as it ought to be. Students are better at solving standard questions from the exercise book than tackling problems. Investigational work is often unfocused, because many students do not understand the purpose of open-ended enquiry. ICT is not yet effectively used to support learning, although some students are now being introduced to the new computer suite. Use of calculators for complex calculations is good, but some students are over-reliant on them when they should be working problems out in their heads.
99. The students' attitudes to the subject and behaviour in the classroom are almost always good, and often very good, where the teaching is satisfactory or better. The presentation of work in their books shows a conscientious attitude and a pride in what they are doing. In most classrooms there is a relaxed atmosphere, and most students listen attentively during the teachers' presentations and get to work quickly when set individual tasks. They generally use the precise methods and processes shown them, writing out full answers to questions. A few lower attaining students leave work unfinished. Most manage to do a reasonable amount of work each lesson, and for homework. The majority of students seem more comfortable as relatively passive receivers of knowledge and understanding, and only a minority actively contribute in most lessons.
100. The quality of teaching is good overall. It is at least good in nearly two lessons in every three, and unsatisfactory in only around one in every ten. The teachers are all good mathematicians, and they explain the mathematical processes carefully and accurately. They have created a good relationship with the students, so that in most cases there is a good atmosphere in mathematics lessons, where the students feel comfortable, and can contribute or ask questions if they want to. They have high expectations of the students, and insist on comparable standards in the presentation of work. There are well-developed systems to assess the progress of the students in periodic tests. The techniques and methods of the Key Stage 3 Strategy are not yet widely used. In one case where it was, the result was a very good lesson with pace and variety, where all the students were fully involved, and the whole class made very good progress together.

101. In most lessons, teachers rely on informal methods to check that students understand the work being studied, but lack systematic ways of checking on this, so that some students' misconceptions and misunderstandings are not recognised and corrected, and in some cases, where all the students find the work easy, they are not moved on to more challenging work. Lesson planning is not based on a comprehensive range of learning objectives, but more on the content to be covered, and lays insufficient emphasis on the key points which the students should understand, or the skills required to be successful. In general, students are still not given enough opportunities to become actively involved in lessons, or to explain concepts in their own words so that they deepen their understanding. Mathematics in too many lessons is taught as an activity where students learn processes for answering routine questions, rather than as an active problem-solving activity.
102. The leadership and management of the department are good. The department is effectively organised, and key administrative tasks shared and done well. The department is fully staffed with well-qualified and experienced teachers, although one teacher is currently on maternity leave. The head of department has successfully created a good team who work together well, but has yet to find a way to ensure that best practice becomes the norm in the department. The curriculum fulfils national requirements, but there should be greater emphasis on the role of mathematics as a problem-solving activity, and the use of ICT as a tool for teaching and learning needs to be developed across the whole department.

Numeracy

103. Standards of numeracy are generally good for higher attaining students, and are better in Years 7 and 8 overall than in Year 9, but insufficient for the middle and lower attaining students to effectively support learning in mathematics and in some other subjects of the curriculum. Many students are insecure when they are confronted by slightly unusual numerical problems. They lack a range of strategies to solve such problems. However, there are some effective applications of mathematics across the curriculum. In art and design, the students show a good understanding of shape and space, and a skill in measurement, which supports two-dimensional work. Interpreting graphs and obtaining information from tables of data support work in science, geography and history. In science, students can transpose formulae when calculating physical quantities. There were some very good applications of numeracy and mathematics seen in business education.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- Standards at the end of Year 11 are about average and are very high compared to similar schools
- Overall, teaching is very good
- Students show a positive attitude to science and standards of presentation of work are very good

Areas for improvement

- Standards at the end of Year 9 are well below the national average
- Increase the monitoring and evaluation of teaching to raise the standards of the small amount of weaker teaching to that of the best

104. Standards in the national tests at the end of Year 9 have risen in recent years but were still well below the national average in 2002. They were above those in similar schools, however. Standards at GCSE have risen significantly in recent years and were average in 2002. Standards were very high compared to similar schools.
105. Standards achieved in Years 7 to 9 are good. Students make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of concepts. Standards in the current Year 9 are below the national average, for example in terms of understanding the mechanism of breathing and work on the circulatory system. In one lesson seen, as a result of very good teaching, students made very good progress in developing their understanding of smoking-related diseases, issues of social responsibility and interpreting data. Standards in this lesson were average. Progress in Years 10 and 11 is very good and by the end of Year 11, standards are about average, for example in terms of students' understanding of factors affecting the rate of reaction, and the explanation of these in terms of kinetic theory and exothermic and endothermic reactions. Standards of investigative work are about average by the end of Year 11. Students with special educational needs make at least satisfactory progress. Students with English as an additional language make very good progress.
106. Since the last inspection, standards have improved, so that by the end of Year 9 they are above similar schools. Standards at GCSE have risen significantly and are now in line with the national average. There has been some broadening of learning opportunities. The CASE (Cognitive Acceleration in Science) project has been implemented well and there is now an increased use of ICT. Student-tracking procedures have been improved. Overall, the progress since the last inspection is very good.
107. Overall, the teaching in science is very good and this is responsible for the very good progress made by the end of Year 11. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure and relationships with students are, in the main, very good. Particular features of very good teaching were well-planned and structured lessons involving a variety of activities conducted at a brisk pace. Clear timescales were set for students. Teacher explanation was very clear and was aided by high quality visual aids, diagrams and the use of models. Teacher questioning gave students time to think and then respond. Very good use was made of analogies and attention was paid to developing students' literacy skills with the use of 'word walls'. Starter activities were used very well to engage students' interest from the beginning of the lesson and the work and resources were well-matched to students' abilities. In one very good lesson with Year 7 the

teacher engaged students' interest with a demonstration of a 'mystery gas' relighting a glowing splint. Students were encouraged to speculate and suggest how the gas might be identified. In a follow-up experiment students were encouraged to predict the outcome of the experiment. Very good use was made of ICT in the lesson. The whole tone of the lesson was set to encourage and develop students' thinking skills. In a very good lesson in Year 11, relocated at short notice to a classroom because of a break-in at a laboratory during the inspection, the teacher organised the students into teams responsible for generating their own questions for a quiz to consolidate recent work. The subsequent quiz generated much student interest and involvement and students made very good progress in deepening their understanding of recent work. Whilst teaching overall is very good, there is some variation, with some lessons which are good and some which are satisfactory. A very small amount of unsatisfactory teaching was seen on the inspection. Where there are shortcomings in the teaching, particular weaknesses seen included an over-lengthy teacher introduction, teacher expectations which were too low and a lack of clear timescales for students. Also in one case boys were more responsive to questioning and the teacher did not direct questions to the girls. Planning was sometimes unclear and appropriate practical work not done. Explanation was not always supported with a diagram. One group is taught by a non-specialist.

108. Students' progress is carefully monitored and books are marked regularly. Very good practice has been introduced with detailed comments being made on students' books rather than a mark or a grade. Some very good use of ICT was seen during the inspection. This needs to be consolidated throughout the department. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education in science is good.
109. Leadership and management in the department are very good. The department has identified the need to explore the provision of alternative courses in Years 10 and 11 for lower attainers. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching are not sufficiently robust but there is a plan to improve them so as to raise the standards of all teaching to that of the best.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- Very good quality of teaching and learning leading to very good achievement
- High standards in Years 10 and 11

Areas for improvement

- The provision for ICT is inadequate

110. Standards are well below average on entry to the school rising to average at the end of Year 9 and well above average at the end of Year 11, representing very good achievement in all years.
111. In GCSE examinations in 2001 all students achieved passes within the range A* - C, and in 2002 results A* - C were well above the national average. Teachers' assessments of standards at the end of Year 9 in 2002 showed students exactly in line with national standards.
112. In work seen during the inspection, standards at the end of Year 9 are average. Students attain average standards in observational drawing and painting. They are able

to look closely at objects and represent them satisfactorily in a variety of media in two and three dimensions, having good regard for tones and perspective. Knowledge of art and styles is satisfactory and reference is made to the work of other artists in developing students' own work.

113. In work seen during the inspection, standards at the end of Year 11 are above average. Students review their work critically and refine it to high standards. Their control of media is above average and some quite beautiful drawings and paintings of, for example, natural forms, such as fruit and vegetables, were observed. Students have good knowledge and understanding of an extensive range of media used to develop work in two and three dimensions. Knowledge of important artists and styles is good and this is further enhanced by gallery visits to see artwork at first hand, thus gaining valuable insights which are applied to students' own work.
114. The quality of teaching in Years 7 to 9 is good and very good in Years 10 and 11. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and art skills which they impart to students very successfully in teaching basic skills such as careful observation and the co-ordination of hand and eye. Expectations are high and methods very effective. Management of students is good. Planning is very good and the individual needs of students are very well known. For example, an excellent Year 10 lesson began with an able demonstration of how to make a natural shape from two thumb pots. The teacher's awareness of each student's stage and language background, and good use of language support staff, ensured that all the students understood clearly what to do and they produced excellent work. The quality of assessment is good and it is used well to promote high standards. Homework, considered to be important for developing students' independent learning and giving additional practice of art skills, is set on a regular basis.
115. The quality of learning is good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. Students make very good intellectual efforts and acquire their skills, knowledge and understanding of art very well. Students with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress. One such student's portfolio included work which showed good observation and use of paint, a well made mask, and good research of pop art, and is likely to achieve a good grade in GCSE. Because behaviour in the department is generally good, students sustain interest and are able to concentrate well. Attitudes to the subject are good and there is a good take up for GCSE. Students with English as an additional language make good progress. Students identified as talented make good progress often characterised by exceptional productivity driven by their interests and abilities. Because of the lack of suitable equipment, students at present are unable to explore and exploit the creative possibilities of ICT.
116. The department is very well led and managed. Since the last inspection standards at all stages have risen dramatically. Resources, which were highlighted as inadequate are now good, except for ICT. Improvement since the last inspection is very good.

CITIZENSHIP

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

Strengths

- The personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme makes a good contribution to citizenship
- A thorough audit of the curriculum has highlighted subject areas where citizenship is being taught

Areas for improvement

- More detailed planning to combine all areas of delivery into a structured programme for each year group
- Develop the way in which citizenship is reported to parents

117. In lessons and PSHE sessions where citizenship could be identified, students' attainment is average at the end of Years 9 and 11. Citizenship is studied through a variety of approaches and many students are not yet aware that it is a compulsory subject. However Year 7 students, following work with the school police liaison officer, clearly understand the importance of resolving conflict fairly and the role of the police in relation to bullying. Through their work in geography, Year 9 students have a good understanding of the social and economic issues facing citizens of other countries. As part of their science lessons, students gain knowledge and an appreciation of the environmental problems caused by acid rain and deforestation. In Year 11, students are made aware of their rights and responsibilities as citizens.

118. In PHSE lessons, where citizenship is part of the focus, teaching is good overall. Lessons are well planned and objectives are shared with the students so they know what to concentrate on. However, in the introduction to lessons opportunities are often missed to explain to students the citizenship aspect of their learning. Students are given ample opportunities to express their views in whole-class discussions and in paired and group work which improves their speaking and listening skills. Students have trust and confidence in their teachers and are able to speak openly about sensitive issues. They can analyse different sources of information and reach sound conclusions. Most students are enthusiastic and interested in the topics but some boys are reluctant to express their opinions. Students' skills of enquiry and communication are good but their knowledge and understanding about citizenship is not yet fully developed.

119. Students take part in a range of citizenship activities through PSHE and subject lessons, citizenship days, visiting speakers, assemblies and school visits to a variety of venues. In a tutor period seen during the inspection, Year 11 students took part in a very mature and open discussion of various topical issues ranging from world conflict to school funding. Students have opportunities to take responsible action at school. These include acting as prefects and taking part in paired reading with younger students. As part of the South Ilford Community Project two students from Years 10 and 11 have constructed a very good website which includes sections on crime, community facilities, health and transport.

120. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. A detailed audit of the curriculum has been done which shows where elements of citizenship are being taught. As citizenship is delivered through a variety of lessons and activities there is scope for more detailed planning to combine all areas of delivery into a programme for each year group. In reports to parents, citizenship is included with the PSHE and tutor

report and at present there are few specific references to citizenship. In the light of present progress there is potential for further improvement in the provision for citizenship.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Good examination results at GCSE in food technology
- A committed team of staff who work well together
- The amount of accommodation and resources available to the department

Areas for improvement

- The department needs to urgently undertake further work to improve low levels of attainment at GCSE in some specialist areas
- The department should revise the whole scheme of work to ensure that the requirements of the National Curriculum are met in full
- Currently the department lacks sufficient vision to ensure that the work which students experience reflects the specialist technology status of the school
- Some aspects of leadership and management of the department are unsatisfactory

121. In 2002, results of teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 were below the national average. The 2002 results were not as good as those in 2001. Many students enter the school with little previous experience of the subject and low levels of attainment. The results therefore represent satisfactory progress. Difficulties in recruiting full-time qualified staff have resulted in a lack of continuity in students' learning.
122. In 2002, results in design and technology as a whole were significantly below the national average with 37 per cent gaining grades A* - C, compared with 51 per cent nationally. In the individual specialist areas, results in food technology were very good, and those in textiles were good. Results in graphic products were below the national average. Results in resistant materials, systems and controls and engineering were poor, and the attainment of students in these specialisms is well below that of other subjects in the school and indicates unsatisfactory progress. Some students are underachieving.
123. Standards in lessons and in work seen in Years 7 to 9 during the inspection were close to national expectations. Work by Year 7 students was below that expected, but better work was seen in Years 8 and 9. Most students in Year 9 are in line to attain average standards by the end of the year. In Years 7 to 9, the attainment of most students is similar. There are few differences in the attainment of girls when compared to boys, although the design work of some girls is neater.
124. In Years 10 and 11, standards achieved vary considerably. They are good in food and textiles where there are many examples of high quality work. Standards in graphics and systems and control are improving, but standards in resistant materials remain low. Although in one group the teacher had made considerable efforts to encourage students in their work, and with some success, across the specialist area as a whole there is still underachievement by some students. Where standards of work are high, progress is good, but in resistant materials, and to a lesser extent in systems and control, the rate of progress is unsatisfactory. Standards achieved by students in food technology and textiles will be well in line with national expectations at the end of Year 11. In graphics, there is likely to be an improvement and most students should be close

to the national expectation at the end of Year 11, but these results are unlikely to be matched in some other specialisms.

125. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, but some unsatisfactory teaching was seen. There were also examples of good and very good teaching. In the best lessons, the teachers engage well with students and encourage them to do their best. In a Year 11 food technology lesson, good teaching and organisation enabled students to work in pairs to prepare presentations on revision tasks. This was done well with students working co-operatively throughout. In a Year 11 graphics lesson the teacher had made considerable efforts to provide differentiated work so that lower ability students could have success. This was very successful and students worked hard to achieve success. In Years 7 to 9, teaching was satisfactory in most of the lessons seen but with one unsatisfactory lesson. In Years 10 and 11 teaching was satisfactory in about two thirds of the lessons seen. Good teaching was seen in one lesson, and very good teaching in another.
126. The quality of learning matches that of teaching. In a Year 11 graphics lesson learning was good because students had good support through differentiated work and lively and stimulating support from the teacher who ensured that students worked at a good pace. Learning was unsatisfactory in some systems and control lessons, both in Year 11, and in some groups in Years 8 and 9.
127. The scheme of work for Years 7, 8 and 9 meets most of the requirements of the programme of study. There is a good course in computer control which is taught to students in Year 8. However, throughout Years 7 to 11 there are few opportunities for students to evaluate existing products and to work on open-ended design and make tasks. Although most materials are covered, many of the tasks which students experience do not reflect the ethos of a technology school. Whilst the work covered in systems and control goes some way to overcoming this shortcoming, there is an urgent need to update the work in all areas, but especially in resistant materials. In Years 10 and 11, there is a similar need to change the type of resistant materials work offered. Students experience resistant materials in each of Years 7, 8 and 9, but only have an experience of the other specialist areas in one of these three years. This approach gives insufficient challenge to students in Year 9, especially in textiles; it limits the progress which students make in the subject and leads to a lack of continuity. This lack of challenge leads to lack of interest on the part of the students.
128. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory overall. Some of the areas for attention are now improved particularly the quality of work and knowledge in textiles. In other aspects progress has not been good, particularly in the attitudes of students to resistant materials. Although the department handbook contains good information about assessment, there is no common system in use which makes it difficult to make comparisons in the assessments produced by different teachers.
129. Leadership of the curriculum team leader is unsatisfactory. Examination results at GCSE in some specialist areas are poor and there is a lack of clear vision to move the department forward as a key element in the development of a technology school. In particular, the aims and objectives of the department are not stated clearly and the work which students experience is often rooted in the past and does not encourage students to engage in the technologies of the twenty-first century. This is particularly so in resistant materials. In consequence, students often develop a negative attitude to the subject, since they cannot see its relevance to their lives. Although some attention has been given to improving low examination results, these actions have had limited effect and are insufficient to improve the low standards in some of the specialist areas. The

progress which students make during examination courses is too slow, especially in systems and control and resistant materials. In resistant materials, the expectations of what students can achieve are often too low. Links with local industry, a key feature for technology schools, are almost non-existent.

130. Some aspects of management are unsatisfactory. The current schemes of work for Years 7 to 11 lack details of the teaching and learning methods which should be used. There is no evidence of how differentiation is to be achieved, or how the department will contribute to students' development of numeracy skills. The use of ICT in Years 7 to 9 is limited although a good course on computer control has been devised. The details in the present schemes of work are inadequate and they do not provide sufficient guidance for teachers new to the school. There is a lack of common approach to many aspects of the department, including methods of assessing and recording the progress which students make. The single one-hour lessons are inadequate for work with food since they limit the type of work which can be done and do not allow a proper evaluation of the work which students produce.
131. As a result of funding from the Technology Schools Initiative, and from other sources, the department enjoys a good level of resources. However, many items of equipment are underused, especially equipment for computer-aided making. Some of this equipment is old but still serviceable and is currently not used at all due to the difficulties in maintaining computer equipment in working order. Currently students' learning and motivation are severely inhibited, and standards depressed because these resources are not available.
132. The department has not been well served by work done in recent years to provide additional accommodation, much of which is related to the design of rooms and services. Two rooms have inadequate lighting. In one room there are no emergency stop buttons. In another room, there is no suitable electrical supply for machines and expensive equipment cannot be used. The power supply to the drilling machines in one room is through loose extension leads which presents a health and safety hazard.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- Good leadership and management of the department provides a clear vision for future improvement
- Relationships between teachers and students are good

Areas for development

- The range of teaching and learning methods being used is too narrow
- ICT is not fully used to support learning
- Fieldwork for students in Years 7, 8 and 9 is not yet in place

133. Results in teacher assessments for students at the end of Year 9 were in line with national averages in 2001 and slightly below average in 2002. This attainment represents good progress when compared to students' standards when they enter the school. In the GCSE examinations in 2002 the proportion of students gaining the higher A* - C grades was below average although almost all students gained a grade in the A* - G range. Girls' results are significantly better than those of boys. Students' performance in GCSE geography was below that of most other subjects they took and also below expectations when compared to their previous attainment. The results in

2002 represent a marked drop from the previous year when over half of students gained a higher grade and results were in line with the national average.

134. Overall students' attainment is average. Where teaching is very good students gain a very good range of knowledge, understand clearly more complex geographical ideas and make very good progress. On the rare occasions where teaching is unsatisfactory, students are less secure in their knowledge and understanding of the subject and progress is slower. Most students have good attitudes to learning and are focused on their work which helps them to learn effectively. In Year 7, students can identify different types of land use in cities and higher attaining students can explain the reasons for this distribution. Year 9 students understand the problems of congestion and pollution affecting Paris and can compare these to problems experienced in London. There are no fieldwork opportunities for students in Years 7, 8 and 9 which limits their opportunities to develop their geographical enquiry skills. Through studies of France and Brazil, students gain a sound understanding of the social and economic problems that affect the citizens of other countries. Most students with English as an additional language can understand basic geographical terminology and higher attaining students use these terms fluently when speaking and writing. The majority of Year 11 students produce good quality coursework following a field trip to Cambridge.
135. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. It ranges from very good to unsatisfactory. Where teaching is very good the work is well paced and all students move quickly from one task to the next which maximises their learning and ensures that they make very good progress in lessons. In a Year 11 lesson, very good use was made of a simple cartoon to illustrate the balance between population and resources, which resulted in all students having a good grasp of the problems of overpopulation. Where teaching is unsatisfactory the pace of work is slow and students make little progress. Relationships between teachers and students are good. Teachers praise students frequently and value their work, which is attractively displayed on classroom walls. A display of work on coastal erosion included a contribution from a student with English as an additional language (Stage 2) which was well presented and contained good examples of his extended writing. Teachers' planning is thorough and students understand the objectives of the lesson so they know what to concentrate on. Teachers produce well-structured worksheets but over rely on textbooks as source materials and therefore miss opportunities to engage students' interest through the use of slides or video programmes. Some wordprocessing of coursework and case studies takes place but the use of ICT is not a regular feature of lessons and hence students' computer skills are not extended. The range of teaching strategies is too narrow and students are not sufficiently encouraged to develop their ideas in depth or extend their thinking skills.
136. Since September 2002 there has been a new curriculum team leader. The leadership and management of the department are now good and have already begun to improve standards. Schemes of work have recently been rewritten, new resources purchased and students' work is being more closely monitored in order to raise attainment at GCSE. Departmental documentation is thorough and policies are in place to assist all students, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, to achieve their potential. Appropriate priorities for the future development of the department have been identified and ways of achieving them are clearly laid out. Teaching and learning are well monitored through performance management arrangements and additional advice is being given by senior teachers in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. The department has the capacity for further improvement because of its good leadership and management and clear vision for the future.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- Very good leadership and management
- Very good curriculum
- Very good teaching and learning

Areas of development

- Strategies to develop independent learning
- Increased use of ICT to support learning

137. Results at GCSE in 2002 were well above the national average in the A* - C range with a pass rate of 80 per cent, and above the national rate at A* - G at a 100 per cent pass rate. Teacher assessments of students' work at the end of Year 9 in 2002 show that students are broadly in line with national expectations. Work seen during the inspection confirms that these standards are being maintained by the end of both Year 9 and Year 11.
138. Achievement by students is therefore good by the end of Year 9 as students have progressed from a below average attainment on entry in Year 7. Students in Year 7 are able to identify positive and negative experiences of life in medieval Britain using a wide range of primary sources. Year 8 students can build upon detailed knowledge of events in the 1630s to analyse the main causes of the English Civil War. Year 9 students can use film evidence and their wider knowledge to critically assess the effects of Nazi ideas upon German youth in the 1930s.
139. By the end of Year 11 achievement is very good as students have progressed from an average national standard at the time of entry to the school to well above this by Year 11. Year 10 students are able to evaluate the Treaty of Versailles in 1919 in terms of the goals sought by the victorious countries. Year 11 students can explore the options faced by the USA in the Cuba Missile Crisis of 1962 within a wider context of the containment of post-war communism. Achievement by students with English as an additional language is good and the very good attitudes shown by all students make a significant contribution to their very good overall achievement.
140. Teaching is very good throughout the school. Teachers plan well and select resources appropriate to the ability range, as particularly seen in a film extract of the memories of a member of the Hitler Youth and in speeches representing the opinions of characters on opposing sides of the English Civil War. Teachers use very good exploratory questions to check students' understanding, as seen for example in a Year 10 lesson which required knowledge of the intentions of the treaty makers of 1919. Teachers' subject knowledge is very good and they maintain a very good pace of learning within a context of well-established routines and a sound rapport with students.
141. Leadership and management are very good. The curriculum is well established but further developed to ensure that all key elements are addressed with particularly good use of the skill of interpretation in Year 8 analysis of women's experience in the early modern period. The curriculum makes a good contribution to the development of students' literacy skills through use of writing frames and an emphasis on establishing the meaning of specialist terms and students' numeracy is well promoted, particularly at GCSE where, for example, there is detailed analysis of the American economy in the

inter-war years. There is very good provision for the students' moral development through work on slavery in the British Empire and the Holocaust. Very good awareness of the variety of social and cultural experiences of historical periods is established across the curriculum, from the study of the Roman Empire in Year 7 to the apartheid regime in South Africa at GCSE. The curriculum contributes very well to citizenship provision in its study of challenges to rule and the establishment of power, especially in its coverage of communist Russia. Assessment procedures clearly use National Curriculum levels of attainment and school-generated data to establish students' progress against realistic targets.

142. Improvement since the last inspection is good. There are now more opportunities for extended writing, for example a short essay in Year 7 on the Roman Empire and assessment tasks in Year 9 which are enabling higher attaining students to make very good progress. To develop further there should be more use made of independent learning strategies and of ICT to support learning by students.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths.

- Very good relationships between teachers and their students that help to establish a good working atmosphere
- Very good teaching and the consequential high standards of examination success
- Excellent leadership and management of the ICT department
- Excellent curricular provision for students in Years 10 and 11

Areas for development.

- A greater degree of uniformity in the recording of assessment data
- To establish a closer level of consultation and co-operation between teachers and learning support assistants
- Additional resources to support the extension of the use of ICT across the curriculum

143. Attainment at the end of Year 9 is in line with expectations with a good minority of students doing better than that. When placed in the context of students' general standards of entry to the school, this level of attainment by the end of Year 9 indicates very good progress. In 2001, the proportion of students passing GNVQ in ICT at the A* - C equivalence was well above the national average. In 2002, with greatly increased numbers, the proportion was again well above the national average, almost 100 per cent. This represents a major improvement from the last inspection. The performance of girls was generally better than the boys but the number of girls entered tends to be less and, in 2001, too small to be of statistical significance. Attainment at the end of Year 11 is well above expectations indicating that students have again made very good progress. Achievement by students in Years 7 to 11 is very good, much improved since the last report because of very good teaching, a high degree of inclusion and the very good provision for students with special educational needs or for whom English is an additional language.

144. Students learn very well. They enter the ICT rooms ready to learn and apply themselves diligently to the tasks set. They concentrate on their work and sustain that concentration throughout the lesson and so maintain a good pace to their work. Although a few students in Year 9 are still rather teacher dependent, the majority of students throughout Years 7 to 9, encouraged by their teachers to attempt to solve

problems themselves before asking for help, are consequently developing their independent learning skills very well. This is helpful for their progress in Years 10 and 11 where the GNVQ courses followed demand a high level of independent work and research using the Internet. A Year 11 student's PowerPoint presentation on 'The Human Body' was particularly good in terms of its content and use of presentation techniques. By the end of Year 9, students' keyboard skills are good as are their experience and use of standard computer software.

145. The quality of teaching overall is very good and this represents a significant improvement since the last inspection. None is less than good and a third is excellent. Teachers' knowledge of the subject is very high and has enabled them to develop very good resource materials to supplement the GNVQ handbooks and on-line support. Their explanations of new work are crisp and clear and high quality demonstrations and presentations are used to exemplify and explain very well. Their relationships with the students are very good and they use this effectively to ensure focus and attention. Zero tolerance of inattention allied to an extremely good knowledge of each student and their work in detail enables them to establish a committed attitude by the students and, as a result, behaviour is mostly very good and attitudes positive. Extremely useful assessment data gives teachers a thorough knowledge of each student. As a result they can target those whose progress needs to be more closely monitored very effectively and direct additional tuition to those identified as having special educational needs. This makes their teaching very inclusive and all the more effective and accounts for the very good progress of most such students.
146. The quality of leadership and management are excellent. That is a very significant improvement since the last inspection. The curriculum team leader has identified priorities for development and addressed them with rigour. He has built an effective and committed team of core ICT teachers who share his vision and together have worked hard to make their subject one of the most popular and effectively taught in the school. They are very well supported by a very effective support team. There is a strong core curriculum in Years 7 to 9 which leads on to a wide range of courses that offers students in Years 10 to 11 a variety of routes to develop their skills. Many of these are more practical in their demands and in their career application and are very well suited to the perceived needs of the students. The proof of this lies in the increased numbers opting for the subject and the level of success they enjoy. Programmes of study are very good and designed very carefully in relation to examination dates and coursework deadlines. Assessment procedures used by teachers are very thorough and detailed, especially in Years 10 and 11, although the system is not uniform and data is not always computerised. Teaching is not observed formally or informally but to some extent teachers' work is monitored through the moderation of course modules. Effective child protection procedures are in place and access to websites using the Internet is safe. Teachers attend a wide range of in-service training courses to extend their skills. The level of improvement since the last inspection is very good.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

147. The use of information and communication technology across the curriculum is generally satisfactory but insufficient use is made of ICT in mathematics, art and design, design and technology and history.
148. The majority of departments are keen to develop the use of ICT in their teaching and a substantial proportion of them encourage if not actually require their students to use Internet websites for research purposes. Students in Year 10 as part of their English studies have researched the fairy tale 'Cinderella' of which there are some 3000

versions throughout the world, which is an appropriate and very relevant activity for students who themselves have access so many cultural traditions and languages. In art and design, media studies and physical education, digital cameras are used to take photographs for illustration and analysis but there are limited resources for photo-editing. Effective child protection procedures are in place but older, more mature students in the art and design department need access to life study sites, which the child protection filter disallows. In science, students use data-logging techniques to record and chart the *ph* values of different solutions and in English, students use desktop publishing to analyse the techniques and skills needed in designing advertisements and subsequently to prove the point, The English as an additional language department has seven computers, which are used heavily at lunchtimes and after school by students using CDs for research or to improve their written work. In music, students use composition software very effectively to compose and perform music on instruments that they cannot actually play! Regrettably this software is not fully operative on the department's computers and so, although students can use it for composition and performance, it cannot be used for the input of music played on instruments, which is a considerable disadvantage. The learning resource centre has 20 computers and these are used heavily both in and out of lessons by students for research and for general work. The librarian uses the administrative system to track reading by students to inform form tutors and the English and English as an additional language departments.

149. Training undertaken through the nationally funded scheme supplemented by the strong degree of in-house training provided from within the department has had a significant impact on the level of teachers' skills. Although there has not been time for its influence to be felt fully, it has already had an impact in raising the standards of ICT across the school. Its further development is now hampered by equipment restrictions. There are not enough computer resources to meet the anticipated demand of the full implementation of ICT across the curriculum and consequently insufficient use is made of ICT to support the teaching of a number of subjects such as mathematics and history.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

Strengths

- Very good GCSE examination results
- Some excellent teaching
- Teamwork and mutual support provided by all members of the department
- The variety of courses offered, in five languages
- Recent initiatives, including rewards for students, attractive displays and improved schemes of work, promoting learning
- Good assessment procedures, enabling students to develop their awareness of the standards they have achieved and what they need to do to improve

Areas for development

- Expand the use of ICT and ensure that it is used consistently with all students
- Ensure work in lessons is pitched at the appropriate level for the ability levels of the students
- Ensure that the foreign language is used consistently and share good teaching practice across the department

150. Standards at the end of Year 9 are below average: last summer 34 per cent of the students reached Level 5 or above, compared with the national average of 47 per cent. Standards of work produced by students who are currently in Year 9 are closer to the national average than this, but still below.
151. The students entered for GCSE in both French and Spanish in 2002 achieved better results in these subjects than they did in the average for all their other subjects. The percentage of students obtaining grade C or better in Bengali, French, Panjabi, Spanish and Urdu was well above the national average. Significant improvements have occurred in both French and Spanish in the last three years. Girls did particularly well in the European languages, exceeding the national average by over 15 per cent in French and more than 16 per cent in Spanish. Boys' results were slightly above the national average in both. Standards of attainment seen in the current Year 11 are well above the national average. This represents very good achievement by Year 11.
152. Teaching is satisfactory overall in Years 7 to 9. When teachers succeeded in creating a secure atmosphere within which they could sustain use of the foreign language and enable students to do the same, standards of achievement were high. At the beginning of a lesson in Year 7 one of the students used Spanish to speak to the inspector and all the students in this class clearly expected that the foreign language would be the medium of communication. This approach enabled students who have English as an additional language to do well as they are already experienced in the skills needed to excel. In some lessons, however, the expectations of the teacher were not high enough; in a Year 8 French lesson they spent too much time checking meanings in the back of their textbook. Students lost interest and sometimes became disruptive when they felt the work was too easy for them or not worthwhile. In some lessons, the needs of students with special educational needs were not met and they made little progress. However, where support was provided their confidence was high and they were able to focus on more difficult work. In a Year 8 Spanish lesson, all the students were helped by an experienced support teacher and even those who had difficulties with learning gained high marks when listening to a taped exercise. Attitudes towards languages are generally positive, though this was less true in Year 9 than in the younger classes.

153. Teaching is very good in Years 10 and 11 and so students in these year groups make very good progress. In the best lessons, students learn well because the medium of communication is exclusively the foreign language. A very well planned lesson in Year 11 required students to discuss issues relating to the environment in French and they responded keenly to humour which was used effectively by the teacher in the foreign language. In a Year 10 Spanish lesson, the teacher was successful in immersing students in the language and engaged each of them in lively, authentic conversations while they composed a short piece of written work on the computers. In this lesson, one of the students with English as an additional language was actively encouraged to use his experience of other languages, including French, to improve his Spanish. The languages department caters particularly well for students with English as an additional language who have the opportunity to develop their skills in lessons in Bengali, Panjabi and Urdu. In one Urdu lesson, a variety of language skills was practised and students discussed the cultural significance of Eid. A particular characteristic of these successful lessons was the trust, which had been established between teacher and students. Where students knew they had the respect of their teacher, they were prepared to take risks and experiment with their new skills and knowledge, making very good progress by learning independently. In lessons where less progress was made, students had not yet developed the skills of independent learning and lacked the motivation to put them into practice.
154. Literacy is well taught within the languages curriculum. The more able students gain a sound understanding of the grammatical framework and acquire enough knowledge to enable them to manipulate language effectively. In a Year 11 lesson, students were taught how knowledge of the difference between subject and object in a Spanish sentence could help them to avoid a typical examination pitfall. Many, but not all, students receive their entitlement to ICT in modern foreign language lessons. They learn how to make the most of computers to draft text, research topics in the foreign language and create attractive posters. However, this aspect of the department's work is not yet put into practice consistently by all teachers. Number work is included in the schemes of work, but few examples of the development of numeracy were seen in lessons or in students' work samples.
155. The leadership and management of the department are good. The head of department is a highly skilled teacher of languages and has a clear vision of how the subject can be developed. Many initiatives have been launched and all have the potential to improve further the work of the department. The reward systems used by all the teachers are very effective and a weekly homework club takes place after school. Ideas for good practice are shared in department meetings and new schemes of work have been written in French and Spanish and they are planned for Bengali, Panjabi and Urdu. Appropriate training has been provided for each member of the department and some monitoring of lessons has taken place. Procedures for the assessment and tracking of students are good, reflecting the values and aims of the whole school, and there is a strong commitment to equality of opportunity. Staffing, accommodation and resources have many good features, including the contribution of the foreign language assistants, but there is not enough access to ICT facilities. The departmental handbook provides a useful outline for further development, but it deals too briefly with literacy, numeracy and ICT and does not provide enough guidance on issues relating to students with special educational needs, English as an additional language or those who are gifted or talented. The priorities listed in the development plan are important, but they do not refer to these issues. Monitoring of teaching is not yet sufficiently well developed, and the good practice, which exists within the department, is not deployed consistently. Nevertheless, there is a shared commitment to improvement of the subject on the part

of all the teachers and the capacity to succeed. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- The leadership of the department is very good
- Lesson planning is very good and a broad range of strategies for teaching result in students being motivated to learn
- Very good challenge of students, particularly in GCSE groups where students are able to use composition frames to develop their learning
- Good use of ICT facilities to enable all students to access the music curriculum

Areas for improvement

- Insufficient opportunities for stretching the most able musicians in Years 7 and 8
- The lack of soundproofing, and access to practice rooms through one of the classrooms disrupts the learning for some students

156. Teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 indicate that standards of attainment were above national expectations in 2001 but below in 2002. Ongoing assessments indicate that attainment will be above national expectations by the end of this year for the current Year 9 students. Overall, the standards achieved by students at the end of Year 9 are good when placed in the context of their standards on entry to the school. Attainment by the end of Year 11 is above the national average. In the GCSE examinations in 2002, there was a significant rise of 20 per cent from the previous year with 63 per cent of students attaining A* - C grades. This demonstrates very good achievement by the end of Year 11 when taken in the context of the low level of attainment at entry of these students.

157. The quality of teaching is good overall in Years 7 to 9 and very good overall in Years 10 to 11. The quality of teaching in Years 7 and 8 is satisfactory overall although there are insufficient opportunities to extend the most able students hence they make only satisfactory progress. In Year 9, teaching is at least good and often very good, resulting in some very good learning. Learning overall in Years 7 to 9 is good. Year 9 students understand how to use the blues scale as the skeleton for improvisation and work independently to a high standard. Learning is very good in Years 10 and 11 because of the very good teaching. In Year 11, excellent teaching was seen when students used a question and answer melodic pattern against a prepared backing track to familiarise themselves with melodic patterns. Students build on prior knowledge to extend their learning. In Year 11, students demonstrated a very high level of composition in 12-tone music using the music computer facilities to good effect. In the best lessons, where teaching is at least good, students extend their knowledge. In these lessons, they make at least good progress in their understanding of musical terms, composition and their practical performance skills.

158. Overall, the relationship between teachers and students is good. Teachers praise good work and suggest ideas for improvement. Very good teacher-produced materials supplement textbooks and very good use is made of the computer software programs. This improves the quality of learning for all students. However, it is disappointing that the computers are unable to cope with the demands of the software resulting in this facility not being exploited to the full.

159. Student attitudes to learning are sometimes unsatisfactory in Year 7 and this adversely affects their learning in this year group. In a Year 7 lesson observed students were unable to listen with courtesy to their peers performing a pentatonic melody. Attitudes to learning are good in Year 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. There is a good balance of practical activities, and students' creative development is enhanced by the composition tasks, especially in Years 10 and 11. Additional support is provided by the class teacher for students with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. This support opens access to the music curriculum for all students. Visiting teachers provide a range of specialist instrumental lessons including steel pans and Indian music. However, opportunities for this extra tuition are limited and demand exceeds provision. This reduces the opportunity of raising standards across the school and restricts opportunities for extra-curricular music. Those students who do attend music clubs are enthusiastic about their involvement.
160. Leadership of the department is very good and management is very effective. The head of department has made a significant impact on raising standards of music across the school. The new study programmes are matched to the requirements of the National Curriculum and the GCSE examination. Departmental documentation is detailed and provides good advice on the practical application of school and departmental policies. The department contributes well to students' development of citizenship, literacy and numeracy skills. The department has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. However, issues of concern remain with respect to the accommodation, which has no soundproofing and this inhibits the learning of the other classes. Access to the music practice rooms disrupts teaching in one of the music classrooms and there is no separate space for the steel band.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Teaching and learning are good; teachers plan lessons with a range of activities that allow all groups of students to learn well
- The good relationships between teachers and students and the positive attitude of students to their work
- Effective procedures for assessing and monitoring students' progress
- Staff are committed and enthusiastic about the subject

Areas for improvement

- The allocation of time to the subject in Year 10 and Year 11 does not allow the curriculum to be delivered in sufficient depth
- Improving the poor state of the games pitches
- Standards of attainment in GCSE sports studies and the low numbers of students choosing the course
- Girls' participation levels in extra-curricular sport

161. In the 2002 GCSE sports studies examination, the proportion of students gaining grades A* - C was well below the national average. All 15 students achieved a pass grade. Students performed less well in physical education than in most of their other examination subjects. There were no entrants for the 2001 examination. Higher attaining students, including the talented, achieve well in a range of sports at borough and county levels. Students achieve particularly well in football and cricket.

162. Standards in lessons and the work of Year 9 students are in line with nationally expected levels. Students achieve well, given their below average attainment on entry in Year 7. Progress is good because teachers plan work that is appropriate for all levels of attainment. Most Year 9 students show sound individual and team skills and demonstrate efficient technique in swimming. Higher attaining students use space well; they accurately judge performance and use refined skills to beat opponents. The standards of a significant minority are below average. They often show satisfactory individual skills in isolated practice, but cannot use them effectively under game pressure; below average hand-eye co-ordination hinders their progress in basketball and racquet sports.
163. Standards of work for non-examination students by Year 11 are above the national average. They achieve well in non-examination lessons, given their average attainment on entry in Year 10. Students learn well because of good teaching and their positive attitudes to the subject. They consolidate previously learnt skills and achieve higher standards than expected, particularly when taking into account the limitations imposed by the below average time allocation in Years 10 and 11. Most students understand fitness aspects; they analyse performance well and show good, all-round skills. Higher attaining students use refined skills and tactical awareness to consistently out manoeuvre opponents; they achieve well in extra-curricular sport. The standards of a small minority are below average. They understand basic technique and tactics, but experience problems in racquet sports due to poor footwork, use of space and, sometimes, lack of hand-eye co-ordination. Most students, across all years, show sound numerical skills. They are confident using scoring systems and measuring performance. Students listen well, are generally confident in oral work and often use appropriate technical vocabulary. ICT skills are satisfactory in Years 10 and 11, but are not as developed in other years, due to less opportunity. No significant differences were observed in the standards achieved by students of different gender or ethnic background. Students with special educational needs, those with English as an additional language and those who are talented, make good progress.
164. The quality of teaching and learning is good in all years. Very good management of students creates a purposeful and safe learning environment. Teachers' know their subject well and enable students to make considerable gains in their understanding of technique, tactics and fitness. In a Year 7 racquets lesson, students of all different groups made good progress because the teacher planned work appropriate for all levels of attainment. Lower attaining students and those at an early stage of learning to speak English made progress beyond expectations because the teacher simplified instructions, modified tasks, used demonstrations and provided short-handled rackets. The learning of higher attaining students, including the talented, is accelerated by extension tasks, grouping and extra-curricular activities. Opportunities are provided in a high proportion of lessons for students to learn individually. In a Year 10 GCSE swimming lesson, students analysed video clips of personal performance and planned improvement. Students' achievement and progress in such tasks are good. Learning was less effective when a small proportion of teaching was more prescriptive and students were given fewer opportunities to explore their own ideas. Overall, students' attitudes to learning are good. They co-operate well with each other, maintain good relationships with their teachers and work at a productive pace. Small numbers underachieve because of poor concentration. Most students, across all years, improve their numerical skills through opportunities to score and by measuring and recording performance. Teachers emphasise key words and are adept in their use of questioning. These strategies improve the technical vocabulary, speaking skills and listening ability of students across the attainment levels, including those for whom English is an additional language. The subject makes satisfactory provision for

students to develop their ICT skills in Years 10 and 11; opportunities are more limited in other years. GCSE students' learning is enhanced by access to the Internet and computer software. Video camcorders are used in all years to analyse performance.

165. Leadership and management are good. The subject leader has a strong commitment to improvement and success and he is ably supported by an enthusiastic team of specialists. Good procedures are in place to monitor, evaluate and improve standards. Assessment systems are good and are used well to monitor students' progress and to set targets. The subject makes a good contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
166. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. The good quality of teaching has improved further and standards in Year 10 and Year 11 have risen to good. Facilities, generally, have improved but the state of the games pitches remains unsatisfactory. The curriculum has been broadened with the addition of an outdoor education component. In order to improve further, the department needs to increase the time allocation in Years 10 and 11; develop curricular links with partner primary schools; increase girls' participation in extra-curricular activities and raise the profile of GCSE sports studies.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Attainment in religious education at GCSE is above average
- Progress made by the GCSE students is good
- Quality of teaching in Years 10 and 11 GCSE classes is good

Areas for improvement

- Ensuring that the programme of study for Years 10 and 11 students meets the statutory requirements of the local education authority's agreed syllabus
- Matching the work to students' abilities, in particular for students with English as an additional language, special educational needs and those identified as being gifted and talented
- Ensuring consistency in marking
- Use of ICT

167. Standards have continued to rise since the previous inspection when GCSE results were below the national average. GCSE religious education results at Loxford have improved significantly over the past three years with 68 per cent of students entered gaining a grade A* - C in 2002 compared with 43 per cent in 2000. Students taking GCSE religious education learn quickly and make good progress, and achieve high standards.
168. When students come to Loxford in Year 7 their attainment in religious education is below the average as expected by the locally agreed syllabus. By the end of Year 9 attainment is in line with the expectations of the Redbridge Agreed Syllabus for religious education and so achievement is good.
169. In Years 10 and 11 GCSE groups, which are represented by one Year 10 and one Year 11 group, standards of attainment in lessons seen are above the national average. Students recall previous learning accurately and demonstrate good understanding of the beliefs and practices of the different religions they study. Students can write at

length and detail, for example about beliefs and about the importance of prayer, why Christians use the Bible, the five pillars in Islam and on issues like war or peace, self-sacrifice, love and compassion for others. Students are well prepared when speaking to the rest of the class and they make meaningful contributions, for example in a class discussion seen in Year 11 on the concept of Karma in Hinduism where some students from other faiths made equally good contributions enthusiastically. Students are able to express their views intelligently, at length and can support their views with good argument. However, the provision made for teaching religious education in Years 10 and 11 does not meet statutory requirements as there are only very small option groups following a GCSE course and the vast majority of students in those year groups do not follow a religious education course at all and this is a most unsatisfactory situation as was found at the time of the last inspection.

170. The standards of work seen in Years 7 to 9 are in line with the expectation made by locally agreed syllabus. By the end of Year 9 students have a satisfactory understanding of the main beliefs and practices of the religions they study. The standard of written work in Years 7 to 9 is in line with expectations made by the locally agreed syllabus, it is well presented and shows that students enjoy the work and respond well to the expectations set by teachers. In Year 7 students are introduced to religious books, symbols, founders and basic beliefs of Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Sikhism. They are beginning to explore and value the beliefs of others and draw conclusions, for example in a good lesson on the Hindu belief of the law of Samkara. Good work was seen on doing right things as these are rewarded. In a lesson seen in Year 9 on the topic of the four noble truths in Buddhism explaining how Buddhists can follow the path to nirvana, students made a good contribution in discussing and relating to their immediate experiences, doing their duties honestly. Students are able to share their views about the concept of God, suffering, body matters and exploitation and such experiences ensure that religious education makes an important and significant contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students.
171. Teaching is good in the GCSE classes in Years 10 and 11 and at least satisfactory in Years 7 to 9. GCSE students in Years 10 and 11 make good progress and students in Years 7 to 9 make at least satisfactory progress. Lessons are always planned well with clear objectives. Teachers share objectives with the students and ensure that the students always know what they are expected to learn in the lesson. All teachers have good knowledge of the subject and ensure that expectations are high enough. Students respond well and are generally engaged in their learning. The school has prepared thorough schemes of work with identified resources which are very useful for non-specialist and newly qualified teachers. There are a number of issues of morality linked to different religions which are very well incorporated within schemes of work.
172. Opportunities for the use of ICT are very limited because of the access to the computer suites. Most of the work is based on textbooks and this is most marked for students of average ability and too little attention is given to tasks to meet the differing individual needs of students with English as an additional language and special educational needs; therefore some of these students do not apply themselves to work with great enthusiasm and so make limited progress in the subject. Students' work is marked with good, diagnostic comments to involve them in evaluation of their own work but there are inconsistencies as some students' work is not marked for a number of weeks and some had only recently been marked.
173. Learning mirrors the teaching in the department and is good in Years 10 and 11 and satisfactory in Years 7 to 9. Students are provided with opportunities to develop their skills of independent learning and critical thinking. Students are taught to think about

social, moral and cultural issues and they gain a good understanding. Students' attitudes to work are generally good. There are good working relationships between teachers and students as students respond well to the teacher and to each other and work together in pairs and groups very well.

174. The management of the department is ineffective as there is currently no head of department. Teachers work in harmony, always looking for the way that learning and teaching can be improved, making a positive contribution to the good progress and high standards. The newly qualified teachers are getting good support. Standards at GCSE have continued to rise since the last inspection but provision made for students still does not meet the statutory requirements to teach religious education in Years 10 and 11. Therefore improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory.

PART E: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

In the inspection, 15 subjects and courses were inspected and are reported on in detail. Work in other subjects and courses was sampled and contributed to the overall picture of teaching and learning in the school.

The table below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 2002 (national comparative data has not yet been published for 2002).

GCE AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Mathematics	37	41	n/k	5	n/k	1.6	n/k
Biology	11	88	n/k	27	n/k	4.0	n/k
Chemistry	19	89	n/k	21	n/k	5.0	n/k
Physics	6	100	n/k	50	n/k	6.6	n/k
Design and technology	7	100	n/k	0	n/k	4.0	n/k
Business studies	22	86	n/k	9	n/k	3.7	n/k
Economics	13	92	n/k	39	n/k	5.8	n/k
Computer studies	22	86	n/k	23	n/k	4.5	n/k
Art	4	100	n/k	50	n/k	7.5	n/k
Drama	3	100	n/k	33	n/k	5.3	n/k
Media studies	17	100	n/k	35	n/k	6.1	n/k
History	18	89	n/k	33	n/k	5.0	n/k
Law	8	100	n/k	38	n/k	6.8	n/k
Sociology	19	84	n/k	58	n/k	5.9	n/k
English	12	100	n/k	0	n/k	3.6	n/k
Urdu	16	75	n/k	6	n/k	3.4	n/k

n/k = not known

GCE A level and AVCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Mathematics	15	93	n/k	13	n/k	4.4	n/k
Biology	6	100	n/k	17	n/k	4.6	n/k
Chemistry	8	88	n/k	38	n/k	6.0	n/k
Physics	4	100	n/k	25	n/k	5.0	n/k
Design and technology	6	83	n/k	0	n/k	3.3	n/k
Business studies	20	100	n/k	10	n/k	5.2	n/k
Economics	12	100	n/k	42	n/k	6.5	n/k
Computer studies	4	100	n/k	0	n/k	6.0	n/k
Art	9	100	n/k	100	n/k	8.9	n/k
Drama	4	100	n/k	0	n/k	6.0	n/k
Media studies	26	100	n/k	35	n/k	5.7	n/k
History	9	100	n/k	33	n/k	5.8	n/k
Law	14	100	n/k	21	n/k	5.4	n/k
English	15	100	n/k	7	n/k	4.3	n/k
Urdu	16	94	n/k	6	n/k	3.4	n/k

n/k = not known

Intermediate vocational qualifications

Qualification	No in final year	% gaining qualification		% gaining merit		% gaining distinction	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Business AVCE	21	100	n/k	95	n/k	16.1	n/k
Science AVCE	3	66	n/k	0	n/k	33	n/k

n/k = not known

SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

The inspection focused on AS- and A-level mathematics, biology, chemistry and physics and AVCE science. There was an in-depth inspection of all of these subjects.

Mathematics

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

Strengths

- There is a good choice of courses to meet a wide range of needs
- The quality of the teaching is good
- The students have very good attitudes to learning

Areas for improvement

- Fostering better understanding of key underlying principles

175. Attainment in the 2001 AS- and A-level examinations was well below the national average. Three of the 13 students who entered the examinations achieved grades A - C, and four failed to achieve a grade A - E. Results in 2002 were slightly better, with seven students achieving grades A - C. In the GCSE group, 40 per cent of the students succeeded in converting their grades in the previous year into the higher grades C.

176. Since the last inspection, standards of attainment, the progress of students and the quality of the teaching have been maintained.

177. Standards of work seen in the AS- and A-level courses are in line with national expectations. Only about one in four of the students who completed the AS-level course last year decided to join the A-level course. This year only half of that original number has started the AS-level course in Year 12. The course offers students a good choice of modules in addition to pure mathematics, statistics, applied mathematics and decision mathematics. In pure mathematics in Year 13, students could confidently differentiate functions of a function. Students in Year 12 could use vector algebra effectively to solve problems using Newton's laws. The students' progress over the period of the course is good. They work hard and have a conscientious attitude to their work but they are more comfortable learning standard processes, and rely too much on memory recall rather than on their ability to work out solutions to problems from first principles. Presentation is good. The students take care with their work and use precise and appropriate processes as taught to them. Their work is generally accurate and of a good standard. Although some are diffident about contributing actively to the lessons, they ensure that they record all necessary information and satisfy the requirements for additional work outside lessons. Overall their achievement is good.

178. The GCSE classes enable a good proportion of students to improve their grades and hence meet their individual further education access requirements. The key skills classes provide good opportunities for students to improve their numeracy and their skills in the application of mathematics in everyday situations. In both these courses, the students who attend regularly are well motivated and benefit considerably.

179. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. The teaching in the AS- and A-level course is always at least satisfactory, and is very good in one lesson in four. The teachers have a good understanding of the key requirements of the course and are

good mathematicians. They explain key processes well but sometimes do not provide the students with enough visual examples or hypothetical models to enable them to develop a better understanding of key underlying concepts. In the GCSE classes and the key skills classes the quality of the teaching is generally good. There are often good opportunities for the teachers to give individual attention to students to meet their particular needs.

180. The courses are well planned and managed. Resources for learning are adequate, although greater use could be made of ICT, particularly in the AS- and A-level courses. The students are very appreciative of the high quality that is provided for them in the courses.

Biology

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

Strengths

- Students make good progress and achieve well. The results of 2001 show good improvement in standards since 1998
- Teaching is good; it has several strengths
- The teachers provide very good equality of opportunity to all students
- The teachers assess students well. They provide very good support for them to improve their performance
- Leadership and management of biology are good

Areas for improvement

- Improve curriculum planning to deepen students' understanding of principles of biology and application of these to living systems
- Continue to improve planning of the remaining modules to match that of the best
- Improve the use of models to help students understand concepts and processes of biology

181. GCSE A-level results in 2001 were average. This shows a significant improvement from 1998 when the results were well below average. All students who took the examination gained a pass grade. Two out of seven gained an above average B grade. The girl students did better than the boy students. However, a caution is needed to interpret these because the sample was very small. There were only three male and four female students. The results of 2002 are similar to the results of 2001. It is not possible to judge how good they are in relation to the national picture as national data is not yet available.
182. The standards of work of current students are average. Year 13 students are doing well as a result of effective teaching, which engages them in demanding discussions. Well-structured lessons lead to productive learning and good achievement. In one lesson, a starter activity improved students' understanding of the structure of the kidney tubules. A discussion that followed enhanced students' knowledge of the physiology of the kidney tubule. A thinking and linking activity helped students to recall how structure of a cell is adapted for a particular function, for example transporting materials using energy. However, not all students were able to recall and apply their knowledge of biological principles involving regulation of water, nutrients and waste products.
183. Students in Year 12 are learning and achieving well. One lesson started with a very effective brain-warming activity on enzymes. The students were required to match concepts such as thermostable, extracellular and intracellular. Working in small

groups, students' energetic discussions clarified their ideas. A good focus on literacy enhanced understanding of concepts such as biotic, abiotic and limiting factors that affect photosynthesis. Further discussion improved students' understanding of the prospect of application of these factors to increase crop yield in greenhouses.

184. Teaching is good. This leads to good learning. The main strengths are teachers' subject knowledge and skills of promoting basic skills, especially literacy. Teachers also put high learning demands on students and assess learning effectively. They are always ready to provide support to students beyond the normal call of duty. Teachers use their good subject knowledge for effective explanations, illustrations and demonstrations. These result in students making good gains in acquiring new knowledge and understanding. They structure lessons well. These lead to efficient learning. They set high expectations for independent learning. As a result, students develop good skills in planning investigations. Discussions and effective use of questioning clarify students' ideas, for example of how to improve accuracy and validity of comparisons in view of the complex nature of variables. Teachers apply a good range of methods. These provide intellectual stimulus and help students make substantial gains in acquiring new knowledge and skills. However, models are not used frequently enough. This hinders visualisation and clearer understanding of concepts and processes, such as how ultrafiltration takes place and how useful constituents are reabsorbed in the kidney.
185. In all lessons, the students demonstrated deep interest and very high commitment to learning. They collaborated exceptionally well to carry out tasks that required them to work together. They respected the views and ideas of other students in the class. They enjoyed learning and did not hesitate to tell this to their teachers. These factors, combined with the energy and commitment of their teachers, make teaching and learning productive, enjoyable and exciting.
186. Good leadership and management lead to good teaching and learning. Evaluation of the previous syllabus called for a change. As a result, a new syllabus was introduced. Some modules have been planned well. Key skills are clearly identified and there is a good focus on how to develop these. For example, there is appropriate application of numeracy such as calculating averages and genetic frequency. Literacy is developed well through requiring students to report orally and from their formal writing of investigations and their writing of essays. Good opportunities are provided for students to do research using the Internet, wordprocessing work, data logging and giving PowerPoint presentations. Teachers analyse results and provide very effective support to improve students' performance. The teachers work very well with the common objective of doing their best to help students learn well.

Chemistry

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

Strengths

- Teaching is very good
- A comprehensive scheme of work and consistency of expectation between the teachers
- Students agree challenging targets which are monitored
- Students have good practical skills
- Productive partnerships with students promote thinking, discussion and problem solving

Areas for development

- Expectations against which students can judge themselves are not always explicit
- Subject self evaluation is not fully developed

187. The GCE A-level examination results in 2001 were similar to the national average, although no students obtained the highest grades. There was no significant difference between the attainment of students from ethnic groups, and all students completed the A-level course. Results from the last inspection, and specifically from 1998 to 2001, show a steady improvement, and girls improved more than boys. Value added from GCSE to AS-level in 2002 was positive, and analysis by the school shows improvement in value added for each of the last four years. The number of students following the course each year is small although the number currently following both AS- and A-level courses is significantly higher than in the previous three years. The standards of achievement seen in lessons are at least satisfactory and frequently good. AS-level students have effective practical techniques, can use specialist equipment accurately, and make valid observations and record in line with national expectations. Most AS-level students understand fundamental concepts such as Redox reactions and electron transfer, and A-level students understand the significance of the properties of transition elements and, with help, electron shells. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls or ethnic groups.
188. Teaching is very good and makes the major contribution to the very good progress achieved by students. Teachers are enthusiastic, confident in their subject knowledge, and their lessons are well planned. They have consistent expectations, their questioning is challenging, and they use the scheme of work to systematically build on prior learning. Lessons are well supported by additional material on the school intranet, and in some lessons good use is made of the electronic white board. Teachers have productive partnerships with students which promote discussion, debate and problem solving. In lessons questioning encourages students to think and receive feedback about their progress. However, sometimes the expectations against which students can judge themselves are not explicit, and marking does not consistently show how each student can improve. Teachers place high expectations on students from a GCSE baseline. Assessment at the end of each syllabus module is followed by review meetings which provide students with feedback about progress and what is required to meet challenging targets.
189. Students develop very good mathematical skills, and good verbal skills through discussion, although their written skills are less refined. ICT skills are satisfactory.
190. Student attitudes to chemistry are excellent and they respond readily to the challenges placed on them. They manage their own learning well and show a high level of commitment which is reflected in very good student retention throughout AS- and A-

level. Effective links have been established with a university so that students can extend their knowledge.

191. The head of subject provides very good leadership and management and she has a clear vision for chemistry in the school. A comprehensive scheme of work is in place and good communication between the teachers ensures consistency of expectations. However, the arrangements to monitor the impact of the scheme of work and teaching on standards are, as yet, insufficiently refined for robust subject self-evaluation.

Physics

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

Strengths

- The teacher's very good subject knowledge, experience and enthusiasm
- The good working relationships and the high standards set by the teacher which contributes to the students' effective learning

Areas for development

- More use of ICT in lessons
- Continued efforts to attract more students to study physics

192. The department offers a modular course which enables students to study physics for one year, obtaining an AS-level qualification, or for the full two year A-level course. The syllabus followed is designed to contribute to the development of the required 'key skills'. The number of students studying physics is relatively low for a school of this size. However, the students rate the course highly, both in terms of content and quality of teaching. This is reflected in the high retention rate, which is 100 per cent for current Year 13 students. It is rather less at 72 per cent for Year 12, as a result of two students leaving the school.
193. Results obtained in the 2001 A-level examinations were well below the national average for the subject, although were typical of the ability range of the small number of students taking the course. Apart from 2001, there has been some indication in recent years of an upward trend in results obtained, particularly in terms of the average point score. This trend showed significant gains in 2002, as the department obtained its best ever A-level results. The AS-level results were also very encouraging, as half the students gained A/B grades. In both 2002 examinations, a 100 per cent pass rate was obtained. Students performed at least as well in physics as they did in their other subjects. The grades achieved by the students are broadly in line with those predicted from previous GCSE results.
194. Overall the quality of work seen in Years 12 and 13 is close to the national average. There is no noticeable difference between different groups of students. The presentation of work is of a very high standard and reflects the expectations of the teacher. In a Year 12 class, students coped well with an experiment to investigate the internal resistance of cells. A thorough analysis and evaluation of the results was undertaken. In a Year 13 class, taught in a classroom, standards of presentation were again high. Students drew ray diagrams for lenses to find relationships between variables. Occasionally, a lack of attention to detail is evident, especially with units and labelling of axes on graphs and imprecise use of terminology. This failing is regularly identified and corrected by the teacher. Practical work is used to complement the formal teaching. Some students commented that they would welcome more opportunity for such work, together with more use of ICT in lessons. It is accepted that

there is currently a low availability of working science computers, which is being resolved. There are also network issues for physics programs, presenting difficulties for classroom teaching. The use of computers is encouraged for independent web research and background information and all students have a copy of the course CD for private use.

195. Teaching and learning are very good. The quality and thoroughness of teaching is a particular strength of the physics department and students learn quickly as a result. They are clearly interested in the subject. This is indicated by positive comments made by the students in selecting the subject. The teacher has very good subject knowledge and displays enthusiasm. Teaching is carried out at a pace, which suits all abilities. Exposition is clear and coupled with careful development of ideas with frequent recap of teaching points. This is complemented by good use of question and answer techniques to test knowledge and understanding. A very good working relationship is present with appropriate levels of praise and humour in evidence. A particular feature of written work is that the teacher insists on the work being that of the students and not copied from textbooks. This improves standards of literacy and provides better learning. Appropriate amounts of homework are given to complement classwork and to extend the students' knowledge. Standards of marking are good and include helpful comments. The progress of the students is closely monitored and regularly reviewed with feedback supplied. Adequate use is made of this assessment data to plan further learning requirements. As a result, students of all abilities make good progress.
196. The leadership and management of the physics department are good. Courses are well organised and are based on the suggested scheme of work developed by the syllabus. However, routine risk assessments and records should be developed further. Since the last inspection, relevant issues have been addressed. Standards have risen and students are showing progression. Their practical skills continue to be well developed, especially relating to the analysis of data and evaluation. The physics department has its own experienced technician who serves the department well. The dedicated physics laboratory meets the needs of the A-level course in terms of accommodation, although it requires blackout facilities. The physics department's contribution to the science faculty's efforts to attract more students to study science subjects in the sixth form is recognised. These efforts should be further continued, especially considering the increasing abilities of students as shown by their GCSE results in Year 11.

Science (GNVQ/AVCE)

Overall, the quality of provision in science (GNVQ/AVCE) is **good**.

Strengths

- Access to science qualifications for all post 16 students
- Students make good progress in lessons especially when engaged in active learning
- Teachers are enthusiastic and teaching is very good
- Leadership and management of the subject

Areas for development

- Ensure expectations against which students can judge themselves are explicit
- Peer review underdeveloped

197. The AVCE results in 2001 were slightly above the national average, and girls attained slightly higher standards than boys. School analysis of the 2002 results indicates that students performed less well in external tests compared with previous years. However,

significant changes to the syllabus and assessment arrangements in 2002 mean that valid comparison cannot be made with earlier years. Further analysis by the school indicates that the language and mathematical demands of some module assessments present a significant obstacle for some students. The standards seen in lessons are below the national average in both Years 12 and 13. In biology students are able to follow guidance on how to dissect a mammalian heart, identify parts, and relate their structure to function. In physics they have a basic understanding of heat exchangers, and in chemistry a basic understanding of endothermic and exothermic reactions but limited understanding about how to measure energy changes. These standards are below the national average but reflect the school policy to provide post-16 learning in science for the full ability range. Students make good progress in lessons, especially when they are engaged in active learning, and readily engage in independent study.

198. Overall teaching is very good and makes the major contribution to the progress achieved by students. All teachers are enthusiastic, confident in their subject knowledge, and their lessons are well planned. Most have good expectations, with challenging questions, and they use the evolving schemes of work to systematically build on prior learning. In one excellent lesson on the significance of the shapes of molecules, the teacher used balloons to model ideas and make them accessible to students. Whilst this promoted discussion and independent study, in another lesson a long presentation from the teacher followed by copying notes did not allow for independent study, or build student confidence and understanding. Teachers have partnerships with students which promote discussion and problem solving although sometimes the expectations against which students can judge themselves are not explicit. Questioning encourages students to think and receive feedback about their progress in lessons, and review meetings each half term provide feedback about progress and what is required to meet targets.
199. Students have a very positive attitude to the GNVQ/AVCE courses. They consider review meetings to be useful and know their targets. The numeracy links with mathematics teaching are effective, and there are good links between the science strands. They have confidence in the teachers. Several students report that work experience provided good opportunities for careers advice.
200. Leadership and management of the subject are good and the teachers in the team have a high level of commitment. An informative evaluation of the 2002 results has taken place which is supported by an appropriate action plan. In previous years the number of students following the GNVQ/AVCE courses was small although the current Year 12 has 15 students which reflect the high profile school policy to provide access to science qualifications for all post-16 students. A handbook for staff sets out procedures which reflect how planning, student assessment and course management have improved since the last inspection, and are now satisfactory. However, peer review is underdeveloped. There is scope to refine the feedback from students to improve subject self-evaluation.

ENGINEERING, DESIGN AND MANUFACTURING

The inspection took an in-depth look at design and technology. The findings of this focused inspection are outlined below. The department offers courses in design and technology; product design at AS and A-level, with a focus on resistant materials. This course has been offered for several years, although the number of students taking the subject has been fairly small.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Good facilities in teaching rooms which allow for a wide range of work

Areas for improvement

- Some course work is pitched at a fairly simple level. The type of coursework which students produce should be reviewed to ensure that all students work to their maximum capabilities
- Steps should be taken to ensure that the work which students produce is linked more closely to modern developments in technology

201. In 2002 five students took the A-level examination and all achieved a pass grade. No student gained a grade C or above. In 2001 three students took the A-level examination and all gained a grade C. The 2001 results are well in line with the national average. The attainment of most students is in line with their ability, and there are examples of high quality coursework. Few higher ability students take the subject.
202. Standards overall in work seen are average for most students. The Year 13 students are in line to attain similar results to previous years. In Year 13, some students are producing some high quality work, particularly in freehand drawing and sketching. Overall, the work in Year 12 is of a slightly higher standard than Year 13 and the group shows indications that they will perform at a higher level than previous years. Some pleasing work was seen as a result of product design analysis of electrical plugs.
203. The quality of teaching and learning is always at least satisfactory, and some is good. A particularly effective lesson was seen with Year 12 students where they worked productively on the analysis of a range of torches. They were able to make good responses to questions from the teacher about the design features of the different torches, and also produced good sketches to show key features. Students display positive attitudes to the subject and for some it is very relevant to future career plans. They work well in lessons and genuinely want to make progress.
204. The schemes of work for the sixth form courses are in need of review, in order to ensure that students produce coursework which allows them to work at their maximum potential on tasks which are pitched at an appropriate level. The type of work seen does not reflect the ethos of a technology school and there is a need to develop such areas as electronics, control and mechanisms. The use of computer-aided designing and making is limited. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The response of students to the subject is much improved and work is now of a higher standard. The two teachers who teach the subject organise and manage it well.

BUSINESS

The inspection focused on vocational business courses as well as AS- and A-level courses in business. There was also an in-depth inspection of AS- and A-level economics.

Business studies

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

Strengths

- Results gained in the advanced vocational business course are good
- The post-16 business curriculum is good
- The team spirit in the department is very good
- Course completion rates are high

Areas for improvement

- The department handbook makes insufficient provision for the teaching of key skills
- Encourage more independent learning skills, especially in Year 12 teaching
- Offer more opportunities for extended writing

205. The school offers a variety of courses including vocational business options at foundation, intermediate and advanced level as well as AS- and A-level courses in business. The focus during the inspection was on advanced level courses. Lesson observation during the inspection was skewed. The school operates a two-week timetable and during the inspection week many students, and some staff, were celebrating Eid. Some planned lesson observations did not take place as either no students reported for the lesson, or there were no staff available to teach. In lessons and in work seen, no significant differences in performance between boy and girl students were identifiable. No students with special educational needs, including talented and gifted, were identified in lessons and, though English is an additional language for many students, no students seen in lessons were identified as being in the early stages of English language learning. As many students were involved in religious celebrations, attendance at lessons was well below 50 per cent. Business education did not feature in the previous inspection report, thus no comments on the level of improvement can be made.
206. In 2001 attainment in A-level business studies, based on average points scored, was average. The percentage of students gaining grades A and B, however, was well below average, but all students gained at least grade E. This outcome is above average. These results indicate good achievement as, on average, the students commenced the course with below average levels of prior attainment. In short, most students gained better results at A-level than was predicted based on their performance at GCSE two years earlier. Though no national comparisons can be made for 2002, results were identical to those recorded in 2001, with the same percentage of students gaining A and B grades and all students passing. These results also represent good achievement. Results in the advanced GNVQ course in 2001, based on average points scored, were well above average. Though no national comparisons are available for 2002, another set of pleasing results was recorded. In both years, achievement is very good. Completion rates on all advanced courses, in both 2001 and 2002, have been excellent.
207. For present students based on lessons seen and work sampled, standards are below average. As prior attainment is similarly below average, the achievement of students is satisfactory. In making this judgement it must be stressed that sampling was skewed

and is based largely, though not entirely, on the performance of Year 12 students. Standards seen were also adversely affected by the considerable absence during the inspection week. In the one Year 13 A-level business lesson seen, standards were higher and the students present made good progress and were recording standards that were above average.

208. Overall, the quality of the teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are committed, but students, especially in Year 12, are given too few opportunities to develop as independent learners. In a Year 12 AVCE lesson on running a business, the teacher gave a very long introduction lasting some 40 minutes. The content of this presentation was very good, but its effectiveness was reduced, as there was little opportunity for the students to apply this knowledge, or answer questions about it. A suitable follow-up exercise was set for the remaining 20 minutes of the lesson, though the teacher did not go through with students the handout provided to ensure that the language used in the text had been understood. As this group had below average levels of prior attainment, more care needed to be taken to ensure that their literacy skills were sufficient to enable them to attempt the exercise. In another lesson, a Year 12 AS-level group were set a test on investment appraisal. The set question was appropriate and challenging and required some numerical analysis. The students settled well to their task but their answers concentrated on the more social aspects of the problem. No student seen was able to adequately cope with the level of numerical analysis required. This weakness indicates some deficiencies in learning and serves to depress recorded standards. Samples of work seen showed that students cover a lot of work and work hard, but there was a lack of evidence of the use of ICT, especially for research purposes. In work seen and in classrooms there was no evidence of approved Internet sites being suggested as a means of stimulating individual research work. Work samples also showed only limited opportunities for students to undertake detailed written work; far too many written exercises required short responses. The contribution being made to developing the key skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT needs refining, so that more challenges are offered that will serve to encourage the students to emerge as independent learners. More care also needs to be taken with the quality of marking. Though work is regularly marked, some of the marking lacks accuracy. Comments showing how work might be improved are rarely made and some definitions, which lack accuracy, are marked as being correct. The teaching seen is successful in ensuring that the students cover basic theory well. What it is not doing with consistency is challenging the students so that their analytical skills are tuned and developed. This is reflected in examination results, where pass rates cannot be faulted, but where too few students gain the highest grades.
209. Teaching and learning were good in an A-level Year 13 lesson on production methods. The teacher had planned the lesson well and took the students through the relevant theory, explaining it well, before setting a series of exercises to reinforce what had been learnt. The techniques used were good and the students learned well and gained in confidence. Progress was good. The main point for development is that the theory was taught in isolation and little attempt was made to relate the theory to business practice. Learning would have been stimulated further if students had been asked why businesses might use such models of production and links with costs had been made. During the inspection, it was not possible to see any Year 13 AVCE lessons and not all staff that teach Year 13 classes were observed. Recent results, especially in the advanced vocational course, suggest that the teaching and learning taking place on this course are of a standard that is better than satisfactory.
210. Leadership and management are good. The head of department has established a very good team spirit and the staff are enthusiastic and keen to help the students progress.

The business curriculum is very good and inclusive, with a wide range of courses available that offer many different routes for progression. A good departmental handbook has been produced, though this document needs to give more references to the teaching of the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT. The accommodation is variable. Some lessons are taught in pleasant and comfortable classrooms, though they are not suitably equipped for business-orientated work. Some other lessons are taught in woefully inadequate mobile classrooms. This accommodation is poor. It fails to provide a suitable business-orientated environment in which the students can work and is having an adverse impact on standards.

Economics

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

Strengths

- The quality of teaching and learning is very good
- The recent significant improvement in standards
- Course completion rates are very high

Areas for improvement

- The opportunities for students to undertake individual research assignments
- The opportunities to use ICT, especially for research work

211. In lessons and in work seen, no significant differences in performance between boy and girl students were identifiable. No students with special educational needs or gifted and talented students were identified in lessons and, though English is an additional language for many students, no students seen in lessons were identified as being in the early stages of language acquisition. Economics did not feature in the previous inspection report; thus no comments on the level of improvement can be made. Course completion rates are excellent.
212. In 2001 attainment in A-level economics, based on average points scored, was well below average. The results recorded were poor, as was the achievement of the students concerned. Following a change of staff, results in 2002 improved significantly. Though no national comparative data exist for 2002, the results for grades A and B and grades A - E are well above average when compared to the national figures for 2001. All students gained at least a grade D. These results indicate good achievement for the students involved. For present students, based on lessons seen and work sampled, standards are well above average. Prior attainment, based on GCSE results, is above average, indicating that the students involved are achieving well.
213. Teaching and learning are very good. The teacher is a very competent and composed classroom practitioner who demands and receives high standards. Her subject knowledge is very good and theoretical concepts are well explained and suitably related to real-life situations. For example, in a very good Year 12 lesson on aggregate supply theory, the underlying theory was suitably explained using a series of relevant diagrams. This detailed explanation effectively built on and extended previous learning. In order to reinforce the learning, a series of applied tasks were set whereby the students had to predict the impact on real output and the price level as a result of a series of supply-side shocks. All members of the group were able to do this work. They knew which way the aggregate supply curve would shift, they could accurately predict the outcomes on a graph and could explain the underlying theory, both orally and in writing. Standards in this lesson were well above average and all students made very good progress. The achievement of this group is good. Similarly high standards were

seen in a Year 13 lesson on exchange rates. The teacher again explained the theory very well and then reinforced learning with a series of well-crafted follow-up exercises. The students clearly enjoyed the lesson and made at least good progress.

214. In work samples seen, it is clear that high standards are expected and one reason for the significant improvement in results is because of the challenges set. Students are set a range of tasks to do, with an appropriate emphasis on developing numerical analysis and opportunities for detailed written answers that give students opportunities for developing their skills of evaluation and analysis. One area for further development, however, is in the use of ICT. Little use of ICT was noted during the inspection and in the classroom no approved Internet sites are advertised. In order to improve further the students' contemporary knowledge and understanding of economics, all opportunities to foster research skills should be seized.
215. Economics comes under the umbrella of business education. The leadership and management of this department are good and suitable opportunities have been offered to allow economics to develop as an independent subject.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The inspection focused on information and communication technology and computing courses.

Information and communication technology and computing

The quality of provision in information and communication technology and computing is **very good**.

Strengths

- Very good teaching, which is contributing to high standards of examination success
- Excellent leadership and management of information and communication technology and computing
- Excellent curricular provision for post-16 students
- Very strong planning for developments in the short and long term

Areas for development

- A greater degree of uniformity in the recording of assessment data
- The monitoring of teaching within the department

216. In 2001 the GCE A-level results were below average because the proportion of students passing at the higher A/B grades was low. The 2002 results were considerably better and the proportion of students' passes at grades A - E was 92 per cent. With 42 per cent passing at the higher A/B grades, the average points score also increased significantly. The performance of boys was generally better than that of girls especially in 2002. This 2002 result continued a generally improving trend since 1998 in A-levels and represents very good improvement since the last inspection.
217. Standards at the end of Year 13 are above average. For a minority they are well above average but for an equal minority they are only average. Students in the current Years 12 and 13 are achieving well and a minority is achieving very well. They are motivated and enthusiastic and make very good progress particularly in their coursework assignments. These Year 13 assignments are all business related and students are developing them in conjunction with local firms. One is creating an appointments

system for a dental surgery and another is enabling customers to select the components for computers to be built to specification. The impact of this high quality teaching is excellent behaviour and mature attitudes and a high level of progress. This level of success is the result of very good teaching that builds on the high level of practical work done in Years 10 and 11, which is a very good preparation for post-16 work. In lessons students sustain a high level of concentration and work at a good pace. Students' achievement is good and any disadvantage arising out of English as an additional language is countered by a high level of teaching support, both in and out of lessons. Students are very co-operative and work well independently. They work well with each other in group assignments and are supportive of one another during practical work, sharing both knowledge and ideas.

218. The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers use their personality and high level of subject expertise extremely effectively to generate interest, cultivate relationships and to motivate their students. Communication skills are very good and explanations are clear but learned and are well supported by sketch diagrams and PowerPoint presentations to explain, for example, data transmission theory. Teachers use questions well to develop independent thinking and have the resources to hand to make work even more challenging for potentially higher attaining students. Teaching is inclusive as there is a high level of support for individuals, particularly for those with special educational needs, and this helps to build students' confidence particularly for those who find programming in Visual Basic difficult. Students are appreciative of the fact that a teacher is available almost every evening, particularly in the spring and summer terms, to help with revision and the completion of coursework assignments.
219. The quality of leadership and management is excellent. That is a very significant improvement since the last report. The curriculum team leader has identified priorities for development and addressed them with rigour. He has built a committed team of core ICT teachers who share his vision and have worked hard together to make their subject one of the more popular and effectively taught in the school. Curricular provision for post-16 students is excellent. There is a wide range of courses that offers students a variety of routes to develop their skills. Many of these are more practical and are very well suited to the perceived needs of the students. The proof of this lies in the increased numbers opting for the subject and the level of success they enjoy. Study programmes are very well planned and are designed very carefully in relation to examination dates and the deadlines for coursework assignments. Assessment procedures used by teachers are very thorough and detailed, although the system is not uniform and data is not always computerised. Teaching is not observed formally or informally but to some extent teachers' work is monitored through the moderation of course modules. Teachers attend a wide range of in-service training courses to extend their skills. As a result of the knowledge gained on one such course, the department is going to change its A-level programming language from Visual Basic to JAVA, which has a greater degree of commercial application and will therefore improve students' career opportunities.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

The inspection focused on an in-depth look at art, drama and media studies.

Art

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

Strengths

- A-level results in 2002 were very good
- AS-level results in 2002 were very good
- The quality of teaching is excellent, helping students to acquire knowledge, understanding and art skills very well
- The subject is very well led and a good range of experiences are provided

Areas for development

- There are no unsatisfactory areas

220. In A-level examinations in 2002 all nine candidates passed with almost half attaining A grades and the remainder attaining grade B. Similar good grades were achieved at AS-level. All the candidates had attained high grades in their GCSE examinations and maintained high standards at AS- and A- level representing very good achievement.

221. Standards of work of A-level students in Year 13 are above average and they are on course to achieve high grades. They are achieving well in relation to their earlier attainment. Portfolios provide abundant evidence of very well developed painting and drawing skills and excellent powers of observation. Visits to galleries have been fruitful inspiring study of a range of artists' work which is linked to students own work, for example portraits in the style of Freud.

222. The work of students in Year 12 following the AS-level course is also above average; students are moving on from very good GCSE grades and achieving well. Working on the expressive unit they show very good skills in creating lino prints and in drawings of the human figure which are very well observed and detailed. Written presentations of research studies are of high quality.

223. Teaching is excellent. Teachers have excellent knowledge and skills and give confident demonstrations. Inclusion and involvement of all the students are very good. A Russian student, for example, has become fluent in English during his three years at the school. He is a talented artist who has been enabled to develop his skills and flair to a very high level. Lessons are well timed with clear objectives and planning and methods are very effective. ICT is used to some extent, for example in connection with digital photography, but the equipment is inadequate to permit exploration of ICT's creative possibilities.

224. Students learn well, responding intelligently to the excellent teaching they receive. The quality of learning, especially independent learning, undertaken by sixth form students is excellent, characterised by prolific productivity and maturity. Good use is made of visits to London galleries to support learning.

225. The excellent teaching and learning result from work in the subject being well led and managed. There is a strong commitment to building on past achievement and to improving standards.

226. The last inspection reported very good standards above the national average, good teaching and good student progress. In maintaining and developing this very good record the department has achieved very good improvement.

Drama

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

Strengths

- The enthusiasm and commitment of the team leader
- Teachers' good subject knowledge
- The sound and improving drama foundation at GCSE level

Areas for development

- Recruitment and retention of AS- and A-level students
- Improvement in accommodation and facilities
- Extension of extra-curricular activity through the school

227. Drama was first offered as an A-level subject in 1998, the first candidates taking their examinations in 1999. Since that first cohort, the numbers of students taking drama each year have fluctuated, rising to ten entrants for the examination in 2001, dropping to four in 2002 and to none in 2003. There is currently no A-level class preparing for the examination and there are only four students in Year 12. Recruitment is, as the department recognises, a priority.

228. With such small numbers, comparisons with the national average have limited value, but of the total 25 students who have taken the examination over the four years all have passed with consistent middle range attainment. In those years only one student gained an A grade and one a grade B. There were nine students with C grades, eleven with D grades and only two fell below that. Students taking drama have, overall, performed well in relation to their previous attainment. In 2002, the four students entered all passed with a C grade.

229. Standards of work in the single small AS-level class observed during the inspection indicate similar levels of attainment. Students are keen and responsive. They enjoy their work and all intend to continue with the subject to A-level. They are gradually developing and extending the drama skills which they acquired in GCSE or earlier. The work on movement improvisations seen in one lesson was more confident than their work on the interpretation and presentation of text in the other. Students are not yet contributing enough from their own observations and analyses. They listen to their teachers but seldom initiate or take a lead themselves.

230. Teaching in the lessons observed was good, with teachers and students obviously sharing enjoyment of the work. However, there was rather too much teacher direction. Teachers' subject knowledge and enthusiasm are evident but their skills in drama are not always being used to encourage independent work, discussion or argument among students. The lack of student initiative and interaction was particularly noticeable in one lesson and, although students listened very willingly, the lesson as a lecture/performance did not adequately challenge them to think or act for themselves.

231. The small department of two full-time teachers is led by a keen drama specialist who is making good use of outside resources and opportunities. Recently students and the teacher visited the zoo to study animal movement. They also went to a London west-end theatre to see a production of the play they are studying. Links with several London

and local theatres and with Shakespeare's Globe and the Redbridge Drama Centre contribute to the increasing enthusiasm for theatre shown by all the students.

232. Recruitment of students for A-level drama relates closely to the position of drama in the main school. The popularity of drama as a GCSE option has increased and there are now two classes in Year 10, almost doubling the take-up of the previous year.
233. Two other factors need attention if the profile of drama is to be further raised. The first is accommodation and facilities. Drama is taught in two large but poorly equipped spaces. The main hall is not suitable for floor work and there are sound problems with small-group work and presentations. This space is not normally used for sixth form teaching. The adjoining drama studio, in which the lessons were observed, lacks curtains, platforms and appropriate lighting and allows very little flexibility in drama work at this level. Though carpeted, it presents a barren space with little on display to stimulate or inform.
234. The other area for development is extra-curricular drama. There is no tradition of whole-school drama productions, apart from talent shows and the performances prepared by A-level and GCSE drama students. There is no regular drama club. The examination productions offer opportunities to only a comparatively small number of students, and to very few in the sixth form. There is now scope for the development of drama performances which are open to the whole school. Sixth form leadership and inter-departmental co-operation would be important in these activities and A-level drama could benefit.

Media Studies

The quality of provision in media studies is **very good**.

Strengths

- Students make very good progress
- Students' enthusiasm and positive attitudes towards their work and each other contribute very well to the successes
- Very good teaching is leading to very good learning
- The management of the department is very good

Areas for development

- Some resources for this very popular subject are inadequate

235. Media studies is a new subject in the sixth form curriculum. Standards in the A-level examinations in 2001 were below the national average. Though national benchmark figures are not yet available, the 2002 A-level results were similar to the previous year's, whilst at AS-level in 2002 the standards attained are likely to be average. These results, particularly those at AS-level, represent very good achievement.
236. The standard of work seen during the inspection is above average in Year 13 and average in Year 12, indicating that achievement is very good. All students are well aware of the technical terms and the ideologies and theories which underpin the subject and refer to them appropriately both in discussion and writing. They analyse media texts, research historical and institutional influences and demonstrate how contextual factors can influence the production and interpretation of texts. This is well illustrated in their work on science fiction films which were made in the 1950s during the 'Cold War' and 'McCarthyism' in the USA. The less able students have some problems when comparing texts, and they do not always fully evaluate the nature or the

content of secondary sources from which they obtain information; thus they have a tendency to adopt the views of others uncritically. However, the writing and discussion skills of the most able students are enthusiastic, mature and fluent. Longer coursework assignments are thorough, well organised and show good independent research and working.

237. The subject makes a substantial contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and ethical awareness, as well as to citizenship. Students are encouraged to work collaboratively and to develop a critical and analytical approach to the changing media environment. Consequently, they frequently discuss perspectives, motivation and reactions of both those who promote and use the media, and their audiences. There are daily opportunities in the course for students to discuss cultural and economic factors, such as capitalism, propaganda and methods of persuasion, as well as the power and beauty of language and images. This was well illustrated in a Year 12 lesson in which students were evaluating the effect of sensationalism in Benetton's advertising strategies.
238. All teaching is very good; consequently so is students' learning. Teachers have high expectations of all students and plan units of work and individual lessons very well to provide an impressive range of stimulating challenges. Teachers know their subject well and give good guidance to students, constantly encouraging them to make their own decisions and to become independent learners. Particularly good work was seen in a Year 13 class in which pairs of students gave well-illustrated presentations of their researches into the historical contexts of science fiction films. The spontaneous applause they received from their peers was a good example of the mature and positive attitude of all students; this makes a substantial contribution to their learning. Assessment objectives are made clear at the beginning of every lesson and students are constantly aware of what is expected of them. Their work is well marked and improvement targets and action plans negotiated with students.
239. The management of this small department is very good. It is well organised and its development planning is clearly linked to the raising of standards. The head of department is well aware that, since the subject is growing considerably in popularity, additional i-Mac computers and editing facilities are needed in order to give all students an equal opportunity in the 'making media texts' component of their coursework. She has been on a number of useful courses and is now implementing the knowledge and skills, which she has acquired very effectively, as well as developing close links with other subject departments, such as English, art and ICT.

HUMANITIES

Only history was looked at in depth.

History

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

Strengths

- Very good teaching and learning
- A very good curriculum

Area for improvement

- Strategies to support independent learning

240. Results at A-level in 2001 showed a below national average pass rate of nine per cent at grades A - B and 91 per cent at A - E grades for the eleven students. There are currently no national benchmark comparisons for the 2002 A-level results. The nine students achieved a 30 per cent pass at A - B grades and 100 per cent at A - E grades.
241. Results at AS-level in 2001 showed that ten students passed at a 20 per cent pass rate at A - B grades and 90 per cent at A - E grades so there was overall good progress made by these candidates by 2002. AS-level results in 2002 show that eighteen students achieved pass rates of 30 per cent at A-B grades and just over 90 per cent at A - E grades.
242. School data shows that students have achieved an increasing value in their results. History students have steadily moved from an average negative value-added result in 1999, in relation to their other subjects, to a positive value by 2002. A comparison of AS-level results between 2001-02 shows that there has been a rise of just within ten per cent of achievement by students against the target grades set using their prior attainment.
243. Standards of work seen by Year 12 and also by Year 13 are average. Year 12 students are able to use their prior knowledge of events in Russia, during the early communist period from 1917, to offer good reasons for the Bolsheviks being able to consolidate their power. Year 13 students can use a wide range of sources to draw sensible conclusions as to the economic and political state of Russia in the late 1970s and the challenges faced by President Gorbachev. They are aware of the problems of evidence presented both by dissidents from the communist state and from its public statements. Year 13 students are able to record detailed information regarding the impact of Thatcherism in the 1980s and to comment accurately as to the likely effects of decisions made by the British government upon unions and the wider public.
244. Teaching and learning are very good and so standards achieved are very good. Lessons are well planned with a satisfactory quality of resources used, a well-maintained pace and the very good use of exploratory questions which ensure that students are able to consolidate their knowledge and understanding. Good questioning was a particular feature of a lesson seen where Year 13 students were helped to assess the usefulness and reliability of a wide range of historical sources relating to Russia in the 1970s. Good management of students has helped them to maintain work folders which are well organised and contain resources for wider reading.

245. Leadership and management are very good. The very good curriculum has been devised to provide a useful continuity from GCSE in its choice of units regarding Russian history, an interesting contrast in developments in Britain and a broader contribution to the students' awareness of societies facing great changes. There is good analysis of the strengths of the courses and there is good liaison with the library to ensure that a good range of periodicals is available.
246. Students have spoken well of the courses which they generally view as both challenging and building appropriately upon their prior learning at each stage. To develop further more strategies are needed to enable students to become more independent learners both in class and in personal studies.

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

AS- and A-level English and AS-level French were looked at in depth.

English

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

Strengths

- Excellent leadership of the department
- Imaginative and thought-provoking teaching
- Learning tasks which are skilfully matched to objectives and have a very good effect on standards
- Very good relationships between teaching staff and students

Areas for improvement

- Consolidation of the existing good practice within the department
- Recruitment of boys onto the course

247. The provision in English caters for some 100 students. GCE AS- and A-level courses are offered in English literature. GCSE English is offered as a re-sit course for students who wish to improve their original grade above a D.
248. Examination results are well below the national average in comparison to all schools nationally. An improving trend in 2000 was not consolidated into 2001 due to difficulties recruiting suitably qualified staff. This has now been addressed and students are now making very good progress given their prior attainment.
249. The standard of written work by the current Year 13 students covers a wide ability range and shows that students are achieving standards higher than would be anticipated by their GCSE results. However, the overall standard is below the national average. They talk positively about the enjoyment provided by the breadth of the course. They like the contrast between writing analytically, personally and creatively in a range of genres. The numbers of students taking English literature in Year 12 have significantly increased. The retention of students from AS- to A-level is above average and attendance is very good. The percentage of boys taking the subject is also starting to show an upward trend. Students in Year 12 are achieving well. They have handled the transition from GCSE exceptionally well, not least in understanding the degree of detail with which they have to analyse a text. In their study of character action within Othello, students' use of extended language was impressive in its complexity. They were also able to use extended metaphors and analyse the nuances of plot sub-texts.

However, attainment by Years 12 and 13 remains below the national average and this reflects the students' prior attainment.

250. The quality of teaching is very good and a strength of the department. Teachers subject knowledge is comprehensive and they have researched the requirements of the course with great thoroughness. Lessons are well planned and structured, matching the teaching style to the needs of students, many of whom have English as an additional language. The pace of lessons is challenging; expectations are high and this leads to rapid progress in the development of students' skills. The use of questioning is very good; teachers are able to draw out strong arguments from the students. This was particularly evident in a lesson where students were interpreting extracts from 'The Great Gatsby' into short film sequences. They showed an understanding of symbolism and social and cultural influences and supportively challenged each other to justify their assertions. Teachers set homework frequently, often requiring independent research and wider reading. There is good provision for Years 12 and 13 students to raise their grade at GCSE by retaking the examination. The written work of these students showed great maturity and an understanding of sub-text which they were unable to express in Year 11. Underpinning all these qualities is the enthusiasm of the teachers which transmits to the students and engages a positive response.
251. Students' attitudes to work are very good. They make clear gains in learning as a result of their teachers' expertise and methods. Their work, over time, shows increasing maturity in expression, competence and the use of technical terminology in a range of genres. They work effectively and co-operatively in pairs and small groups, creating a mutually supportive atmosphere.
252. Marking is rigorous and the assessments of students' work accurate. Feedback is given regularly and teachers' written comments on essays are informative and supported by specific targets for development.
253. There is very good support for learning outside timetabled lessons. Staff give freely of their time both during the lunch hour and after school to support individuals. Courses are enriched by trips to the theatre, cinema and residential visits. Students are given the opportunity to make independent choices of texts to study and are mentored by a member of the English department or the librarian. The library provides book lists and synopses which have successfully encouraged a 'reading culture' in Years 12 and 13.
254. The leadership and management are excellent leading to improving standards and achievement. The head of department sets a very strong and enthusiastic example. Teachers work effectively together to share and pool their strengths and to support the students. There is effective monitoring of teaching and learning and teaching staff are deployed to best effect. There are rigorous self-evaluation processes in operation within the department.

French

Overall, the provision in French is **very good**.

Strengths

- Lessons are well planned and resourced
- Teaching is very good and sensitive to the needs of the students
- Students are working hard and making good progress

Areas for development

- Raise standards of attainment, increasing fluency and breadth of vocabulary, enabling students to manage the progression from GCSE to AS-level more easily
- Consolidate the course, developing policies and practices as well as strategies for the recruitment of students

255. No examination results are available as the three students in Year 12 are the school's first group to take the French AS-level course. The work they are producing currently in lessons and assessments is generally in line with the national average, except in the speaking skill where they lack fluency.
256. The teaching in the sixth form AS-level French course is very good. Relationships between teachers and students are very good and the teaching is well adjusted to meet their needs. The students are working hard and making very good progress. Teachers are sensitive to the challenges faced by students and provide them with appropriate materials, covering topics which are interesting and relevant. Teachers conduct lessons exclusively in French and students therefore have considerable opportunity to develop their listening and speaking skills. They are benefiting from the intensive practice and are learning how to listen accurately. Students are able to improve their reading skills in lessons: in one they studied an extract from a French television magazine and in another they read an analysis of the effects of advertising. Literacy skills have been well taught and they have a sound framework of grammatical knowledge, within which they can place the wide-ranging new vocabulary required by the A-level course. However, they are still hesitant when speaking and uncertain of the meaning of some elementary words and structures. They are finding the leap from GCSE to AS-level exciting, but challenging, particularly the need to write and speak extensively about the topics they study.
257. Management of the delivery of the sixth form course is satisfactory. Arrangements have been made for students to accompany younger students to France in the summer and a number of more local study visits are planned. A short document has been written, outlining the aims of the course, together with several other essential items, including a clear division of responsibilities between the two principal teachers. This enables the teachers to work together successfully and coherently. However, the documentation does not yet include a development plan and no reference is made to key skills or a review process. At present, no strategy for improving recruitment to the course has been made explicit or discussed formally.