

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **FULHAM CROSS SCHOOL**

Fulham, London

LEA area: Hammersmith and Fulham

Unique reference number: 100360

Headteacher: Jan Cartwright

Reporting inspector: Mr Roderick Passant  
2728

Dates of inspection: 16 - 19 September 2002

Inspection number: 251045

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 16 years

Gender of students: Female

School address: Munster Road  
Fulham  
London

Postcode: SW6 6BP

Telephone number: 020 7381 0861

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Val Carter

Date of previous inspection: 21 September 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members |                  |                      | Subject responsibilities                                 | Aspect responsibilities   |
|--------------|------------------|----------------------|--|---|
| 2728         | Roderick Passant | Registered inspector | Educational inclusion                                    | <p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>How high are standards?</p> <p>a) The school's results and achievements</p> <p>How well are students taught?</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p> |
| 10329        | Brian Sampson    | Lay inspector        |  | <p>How high are standards?</p> <p>b) 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>                                    |
| 23413        | Robert Allen     | Team inspector       | English  |   |
| 30911        | John Barton      | Team inspector       | Modern foreign languages                                 |   |
| 4697         | Robert Black     | Team inspector       | Music  |   |
| 30545        | David Castell    | Team inspector       | Geography  | How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to students?  |
| 31772        | Alan Kelly       | Team inspector       | History  |   |
| 11529        | George Kyriacos  | Team inspector       | Information and communication technology                 |   |
| 31983        | Debra Makin      | Team inspector       | Drama<br>Physical education                              |   |
| 12179        | Laurence Moscrop | Team inspector       | English as an additional language<br>Religious education |   |
| 12630        | David Naylor     | Team inspector       | Mathematics  |   |
| 30281        | Dorcas O'Dell    | Team inspector       | Art  |   |
| 20420        | Stuart Rawcliffe | Team inspector       | Science  |   |
| 7636         | Anil Sinha       | Team inspector       | Health and social care                                   |   |

|       |               |                |                           |  |
|-------|---------------|----------------|---------------------------|--|
| 11300 | Barry Smith   | Team inspector | Special educational needs |  |
| 8682  | Martin Trevor | Team inspector | Design and technology     |  |

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school is an inner city 11 to 16 comprehensive girls' school. It is smaller than average with approximately 600 students<sup>1</sup> on roll. The students come from a range of social backgrounds but many are socially or economically disadvantaged. Nearly half the students are eligible for free school meals, a figure well above the national average. The ethnic mix of the school is very diverse. Three quarters of the girls come from a range of ethnic minority backgrounds and the percentage of students speaking English as an additional language is very high, well over half the school, and 48 of these are at an early stage of learning English. There are 34 heritage languages spoken within the school. The main language groups are English, Arabic, Urdu, Bengali and Somali. Nearly a quarter of the girls are refugees, a number which has doubled since the previous inspection. A quarter of the girls have been identified as having special educational needs, which is above the national average. The percentage of students having statements of educational need is below the national average. A significant number of students have needs pertaining to emotional and behavioural difficulties. Overall attainment on entry to the school is improving but remains generally average or below average and in some subjects attainment is well below average. The overall attainment of older students when they joined the school is lower. The school has students joining it from some 37 primary schools. There is a small but significant number of students who join the school late in their school careers. There is also one student who is in public care. The school is a partner school in an Excellence in the City Education Action Zone (EiCAZ), which is a government-funded initiative. Through the work of the zone the school has been able to explore ways to smooth the transition from primary to secondary school, invest in ICT and staff training and conduct outreach work to improve attendance and to support families with English as an additional language. The work of the zone, carefully linked to other initiatives, is helping the school raise standards. The school has gained 'Artsmark Award Silver' by the Arts Council in recognition of the work done in the arts, particularly art and drama.

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

Fulham Cross is an effective school. It has many strengths. Students have very positive attitudes to learning and their relationships are very good. It is a strong community that is founded upon respect for others. The care and provision for students' development is very good. Overall teaching is satisfactory with much good or better teaching seen. Students make at least satisfactory progress and many, including those with additional needs, make better than expected progress. The school is led very well by the headteacher and overall management of the school is good. Standards are improving. The percentage of students gaining A\* to C grade at GCSE is below national averages but well above average when compared to schools in a similar free school meals band. Overall performance at GCSE is close to what students in similar schools achieve. The current provision for design and technology and physical education is unsatisfactory. There are weaknesses in the way the curriculum is organised. The value for money currently provided by the school is satisfactory and improving.

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

- The provision for students' development that results in students having very good attitudes to learning and respect for each other.
- The creation of a strong, unified community.
- Students achieve well relative to their prior attainment in English, art, drama, geography, history, modern languages and religious education and attain national expectations in information and communication technology (ICT).
- The school is led very well by the headteacher with a focus on raising standards.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Student' is the term normally used in Ofsted reports to describe 16 to 18 year olds. The term 'pupil' is normally used to describe 11 to 16 years old attending school. However, the school prefers the use of the term 'student' and therefore this is used throughout the report to describe 11 to 16 year olds attending the school

### What could be improved

- The overall performance at GCSE.
- The use of assessment to raise standards.
- The way the school groups students and the over-reliance on these groups as a means of meeting students' needs.
- The way the timetable is organised.
- Statutory aspects of the curriculum and the provision for physical education and design and technology.
- Developing a reading culture in the school.

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

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

The school was last inspected in September 1998. There has been good improvement since then. Standards have improved both at Key Stage 3<sup>2</sup> and at GCSE. Teaching has improved. Management has improved and the school improvement plan is an effective management tool and is now based on very good self-evaluation. A number of initiatives and the funding attached to them have helped the school improve. Difficulties with regard to staff recruitment in specialist subjects have slowed improvements. Last year one teacher in five was on a temporary contract.

### STANDARDS

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

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

Overall performance in National Curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science at Key Stage 3 in 2001 was well below the national average. It was above average compared to similar schools. Standards in mathematics have improved since the previous inspection but results vary year-on-year and in 2001 were below average compared to similar schools. Attainment on entry in mathematics is lower than in English and Science where results were above average compared to similar schools. The overall trend for improvement in test performance at Key Stage 3 was below the national trend, although 2002 results show significant improvement.

The school sets itself challenging targets. It exceeded these in 2002, with 43 per cent of students gaining 5+ A\* to C grades in the GCSE examinations. At other grade thresholds it failed to meet its targets. Trends in the improvement at GCSE are broadly in line with the national trend. Students achieve well in a number of subjects, including English. They make satisfactory progress in mathematics and science. The current provision for design and technology and physical education is unsatisfactory and students are not achieving as well as they should. Students with additional needs, that is those students who are learning English as an additional language and students who find learning difficult, do well. In the 2001 examinations achievement by ethnic category showed that white girls, other than those from the UK, Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi students did well. White UK girls, as a group, performed least well. Well over three quarters of students go onto further education when they leave the school.

<sup>2</sup> Key Stage 3 describes the period in school for students aged 11 to 14 years old, the lower part of the school. Key Stage 4 describes the period 14 to 16 years old, the upper part of the school.



## STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect                                 | Comment   |
|--|---|
| Attitudes to the school                | Students have very good attitudes to school and to learning.                                  |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms    | Overall behaviour is good and often very good, though there is some unsatisfactory behaviour. |
| Personal development and relationships | Very good. The school is a strong community. Students respect others' values and beliefs.     |
| Attendance                             | Satisfactory, in line with national averages. It has improved since the last inspection       |

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of students: | Years 7 – 9 | Years 10 – 11 |
|-----------------------|-------------|---------------|
| Quality of teaching   | good        | satisfactory  |

*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 satisfactory. This is based on the lessons seen and by examining students' work to judge the impact of teaching over time. This has been affected in some subjects by previous difficulties in recruitment. As a result, students make satisfactory progress overall, with the majority of students making the progress they should.

Teaching in English is good and often very good across the school. Teaching in mathematics is satisfactory overall and some of the teaching is good or better. In science at Key Stage 3 the majority of lessons were good. At Key Stage 4 teaching in science was satisfactory with a number of good lessons.

The teaching of literacy skills across the subjects of the curriculum is, overall, satisfactory. Speaking and listening skills are generally promoted well. A key element in the further raising of standards is that the school needs to develop a richer reading culture. Numeracy is taught satisfactorily. Difficulties with number skills are slowing the progress of many students and this is beginning to be addressed in the mathematics department but there is currently no whole school number policy. Whilst practice varies among subjects there is sufficient good practice to ensure that students with additional needs make good progress. There were good examples of higher attaining students being given additional challenge. Some staff place over-reliance on the grouping of pupils, which is the same for all subjects, to ensure that work meets the needs of students without appreciating the wide range of attainment within the groups. The challenge for the school, if it is to raise overall examination performance, lies with helping those students in the middle attaining groups to improve their overall grades. This group of students often includes white UK girls.

Apart from difficulties of recruitment of staff there are some factors relating to the way groups are put together which cause discontinuities in learning. These relate to the organisation of groups and aspects of timetabling. Overall, students do not know how to improve their work and the use of assessment to develop learning is currently unsatisfactory.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect  | Comment  |
|---|--|
| The quality and range of the curriculum   | Overall this is satisfactory. There are major strengths regarding the personal, social and health education and careers programme but weaknesses in the statutory provision modern languages and design and technology at Key Stage 4.   |
| Provision for students with special educational needs   | The provision is satisfactory. The strategic role of the co-ordinator needs development.   |
| Provision for students with English as an additional language                                 | Good. The department is organised well.  |
| Provision for students' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Good, with specific strengths in the moral provision. The school works very hard to raise students' sense of self-esteem and confidence. The cultural diversity of the school is reflected within the curriculum and is considered carefully. More work is needed to find ways to engage white UK girls in the learning opportunities in the school. Social provision is good. |
| How well the school cares for its students  | The school cares for its students very well. For many students the school provides a stability and structure often missing in their personal lives.  |

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect   | Comment   |
|--|---|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | There is strong and very effective leadership by the headteacher and members of the leadership team. Management is good, some aspects very good.  |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities             | There is an effective committee structure. Parents are currently under-represented on the governing body. The governors have a good understanding of governance and through regular reports know the school's priorities for improvement. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance                       | The school has developed very good systems to evaluate its performance. It has a very good appreciation of its strengths and priorities for improvement.  |
| The strategic use of resources                                   | Additional funding is used very effectively to develop the school's priorities. Resources are used effectively.   |

Currently the staffing has stabilised and teachers are qualified by training or experience. There is a commitment to improvement. Aspects of the accommodation are unsatisfactory. The library is lacking in books and is under-used. The school applies the principles of best value very well.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most  | What parents would like to see improved   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The school expects their child to work hard, achieve of her best and become mature and responsible.</li><li>• Their child likes school, is making good progress and behaviour is good.</li><li>• They also believe that the school is well led and managed, provides an interesting range of activities outside of lessons and that they, as parents, feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A minority of parents felt that they were not kept well informed of how their child is getting on, that the school did not work closely with parents and that there were issues about homework.</li></ul> |

The inspection agrees with parents' positive views of the school. Overall homework is good. The school does work hard to involve parents through formal and informal contact. There are regular academic review days to meet with staff. The quality of reports requires improvement but they are only issued after discussion with parents. The overall quality of information sent to parents is satisfactory.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Attainment on entry to the school has improved in the recent past and lies close to but below average. Attainment on entry of older students is below average and in some subjects well below average.
2. Overall performance at Key Stage 3 in 2001 was well below the national average but above average compared to similar schools. Standards in mathematics have improved since the previous inspection but results vary year-on-year and in 2001 were below average compared to similar schools. Attainment on entry in mathematics is lower than in English and science, where results at the end of Year 9 were above average compared to similar schools.
3. The overall trend for improvement in test performance at Key Stage 3 was below the national trend although 2002 results (for which there are not yet national comparative data available) show significant improvement. In English for example, 57 per cent of students gained level 5 or above, which would place the school below average nationally but well above average when compared to what similar schools achieved in 2001. In mathematics 51 per cent of students achieved level 5 or above and in science 58 per cent, in both cases below average nationally but above average in the case of mathematics and well above in the case of science compared to similar schools (using 2001 data).
4. The percentage of students achieving 5+ A\* to C grades in 2001 was below the national average but well above average when compared to similar schools. The 2002 results show further improvement with 43 per cent of students gaining grades in this range. The school sets itself challenging targets for the percentage of students achieving each type of grade threshold. The 2002 results were above the school's target figure for pupils gaining A\* to C grades. The percentage of students gaining grades A\* to G was well below the national average in 2001 and below average when compared to similar schools. There was a similar picture for those students gaining one grade at GCSE in the range A\* to G. Results in 2002 showed improvement but were below the school's target figure.
5. A more accurate method of assessing overall performance than by the percentage of students gaining a specific grade threshold is by using the average point score. This assigns a numeric value to each grade and then divides the total number of grades by the number of students eligible for the examinations. This indicates that the average point score per pupil was well below average compared to national figures but close to the average for similar schools. In 2002, the average point score for students showed slight improvement but was well below the school's own target figure. This was due to different procedures for assessing the average point score being introduced by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) rather than a decline in standards. When GCSE results are viewed over time, the trend for improvement is broadly in line with the national trend.
6. The local education authority supplies the school with detailed analysis of pupil achievement by ethnicity. The numbers of students in any one category are often small and results fluctuate year-on-year as a result. In 2001 the highest attaining groups were white girls other than from the UK, followed by Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi students. The lowest performing were white UK girls, who formed the largest group. Those students who speak English as an additional language and who are at stage 3 (there are four stages to describe levels of language fluency with stage one being the early stage of language acquisition) performed above the school average. Those students at stage 4 performed well above the school average. Students at an earlier stage of language acquisition found success in examinations very difficult. Helping students develop their English skills beyond stage 2 into stage 3 is clearly an important one in determining likely examination success.

7. All Year 11 students on the special educational needs register last year were entered for at least one GCSE examination in 2001 and well over half gained passes in English, maths and science. All but one gained a pass in at least one core subject. Students' examination grades exceeded the estimated grade more often than not and 20 of those on the Year 11 register augmented their qualifications with a range of good passes in alternative certificated courses showing that students with special educational needs attain well.
8. Overall, students with additional needs: those identified as having difficulties in learning or those students acquiring English as an additional language make good progress and achieve well. The increase in the percentage of students achieving A\* to C indicates that abler students, including those identified as gifted and talented also achieve well. The school has identified rightly the need to focus on the average and just below average attaining students who are in the middle groups in order to raise the overall achievement. Whilst maintaining the support to those students with additional needs the school needs to ensure that more is demanded of these students, often described as the 'quiet achievers'.
9. In English, skills in reading and writing, and speaking and listening are below average, unsurprising given the nature of the intake. Across the school listening skills are good. Older, faster learners speak well and what they say is thoughtful and structured carefully. Other students tend to speak more informally, using lots of 'fillers' such as 'you know'. Reading skills are below average generally and the majority of students do not find reading easy. Writing skills are also below average. Younger students tend to write in a conversational colloquial style that often persists into GCSE years with a tendency to tell the story rather than analyse the various elements. Spelling and punctuation can be erratic. Although standards may be below national averages, the picture is improving and results in English are getting better. Students build progressively on their low language base and their levels of achievement in English and the quality of learning are good. Students work hard and want to improve and this high level of motivation, coupled with good teaching, means that they make good progress in developing their English skills, reflected in their improved standards.
10. In mathematics, attainment is improving and there is now satisfactory progress across the school. There is a focus on numeracy within the department to address students' insecure numerical skills. These poor basic skills are currently hindering progress of all but the abler students. Most lessons start with a short mental test. There is no whole school numeracy policy to ensure that students' numerical skills and understanding are progressively developed in a consistent and coherent way across the school. The difficulties in recruiting specialist mathematics teachers and the consequent lack of a stable mathematics department have affected the overall standards and rate of improvement within the department.
11. Pupil progress in science is satisfactory – with the more able students achieving well. In general what needs further development is the quality of thinking as scientists by extending the style of questioning to probe students' understanding and to encourage them to think more about applications of concepts, critical analysis of data and the science behind observations.
12. Across the school students achieve well in art, drama, geography, history, modern languages and religious education. Standards in drama are above average and they are average in modern foreign languages and geography. In ICT standards have improved steadily and students attain nationally expected standards, although some aspects, such as control, are not covered. Achievement is satisfactory in music. Students make satisfactory progress in the GNVQ course Health and Social Care. In design and technology, the high standards evident in the examination results were not observed in students' current work, and the unsatisfactory nature of the overall provision means that students are not achieving as they should. Although members of staff are working hard to improve standards and address the issues relating to the current unsatisfactory provision in physical education, standards and achievement are below average.
13. Recent increased funding has assisted the overall improvement in standards. Funding through a range of government initiatives, including EiCAZ has provided the school with the means to address students' specific needs and, for example, to make significant investments in ICT. Students' very good attitudes to learning and the way these are fostered, not only in lessons but

also in and around the school, are a very important factor in the good progress some students make. Those students who are learning English as an additional language are particularly motivated to learn English, develop their skills and do well. In addition, whilst it is difficult to quantify, some parents are very supportive of students' aspirations. The school recognises this and actively seeks to develop the partnership with the home.

14. There are however, a number of factors that have made improvements difficult. The most important of these is the difficulty in recruitment in specialist subject areas such as mathematics and design and technology. Last year one teacher in five was on a temporary contract. In addition there are a number of internal factors that cause discontinuity in learning. These are explored in more detail in the Teaching and Learning section of the report.

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

***Students' attitudes to school, relationships and personal development are very good. Behaviour is good.***

15. The majority of the students are enthusiastic about their school and what it offers them and feel that the school cares for them personally. This was evident from talking to a group of very keen, new entry, Year 7 students. Most of them already knew what they wanted to do in life, for example, become a lawyer or work in their own religion and they discussed how they thought that the school could help them achieve these aims. Older students, too, felt that they were listened to and had a say in the school. The majority of students hold the school in very high respect and value what it is trying to do to support them.
16. Across the school relationships between students and staff and students are very good. There is a strong sense of community. Girls display maturity in discussion; they listen well and respect others' viewpoints. They work well in groups and independently. They assume responsibility when given the opportunity and are, in the main, motivated to do well. They want to learn and recognise that they need to take responsibility for their learning. Older students display an assertive, confident independence. The majority have very good respect for each other and their teachers.
17. Students' behaviour at the school is good overall. The majority of students behave well for most of the time within lessons and around the school. In 90 per cent of lessons behaviour is satisfactory or better and in 75 per cent of lessons behaviour is at least good. There is some unsatisfactory behaviour, unsurprising when there is a significant number of girls identified as needing support for their emotional and behavioural difficulties. Sometimes there is a clear cause, such as when there is cramped teaching space or when a teacher is still forming a relationship with new students or when the task is too difficult. In the main, however, unsatisfactory behaviour is focused on two specific teaching groups who, for whatever reason, have attracted a 'critical mass' of girls who are less easy to motivate. A significant number of these are white UK students.
18. There is little evidence of graffiti and none of vandalism. Some students are boisterous within the corridors at break and lunchtime but it is usually exuberance and never malicious and the acoustics of the building do not help, because they amplify any noise made. Girls are trusted to be in and around the building during their breaks. Lunchtime is civilised. The school has to account to the local education authority for any exclusion. The school works hard to keep students 'on side' and exclusion is seen as the last resort. There were four temporary exclusions during the last year and although statistically there is an over-representation from one ethnic group, in the event three of the students were involved in the same incident. The school keeps detailed records of any incident and these indicate an absence of oppressive or racist behaviour. Members of staff are alert to all forms of bullying or intimidation. Students tend to include rather than exclude others and this stems from the very strong ethos of the school that stresses the importance of respect for one another.
19. Attendance is now satisfactory and compares well with the national figures for this type of school. It has improved since the previous inspection. However attendance of Year 11 students does tend to fall away in the spring term before they leave the school. The majority of

the students come to the school on time and most lessons commence promptly. The school has very little internal truancy and no unexplained absence trends.

## HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS TAUGHT?

***Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. This is based on the lessons seen and by examining students' work to judge the impact of teaching over time. This has been affected in some subjects by previous difficulties in recruitment. Teaching is satisfactory for students at Key Stage 4 and, on balance, good for students at Key Stage 3. As a result, students make satisfactory progress overall.***

20. Very good and sometimes excellent teaching was seen in over a quarter of the lessons. Good teaching was seen in a further third of the lessons. Examples of good teaching were seen in most subjects and in no subject was the overall quality of teaching unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection. Students who have additional needs, those who find learning difficult and those for whom English is an additional language make good progress. Able students tend to make satisfactory progress. Students in Key Stage 3 make good progress linked to the better teaching. Very little unsatisfactory teaching was seen. An area of obvious improvement is that the school has developed a culture in which ICT is used by most staff with growing ease and confidence to support students' learning in their subject. Whilst some subject areas have still some way to go in this development, students' use of laptops around the school is having a very positive affect in opening up subjects and in supporting the quality of learning.
21. Last year one in five members of staff was on temporary contracts. Nevertheless, the school management continued to further improvements. However, the discontinuity of staffing and the difficulties surrounding recruitment, particularly in some subject areas, have disrupted the quality of students' learning over time, affected the overall quality of teaching and, as in the case of mathematics, had a negative impact on standards. At the time of the inspection the staffing situation had stabilised. Older students, in discussion, were philosophical about the staff changes they had had and they clearly did not blame the school for difficulties in recruitment. 'I don't know what it is we do to mathematics teachers', said one girl who had had six teachers for mathematics in a couple of years. They pointed out what tended to happen when there was a new teacher: that topics were left and new ones started and the teacher had to get to know the students all over again.
22. A fundamental strength of the school is the high quality of the relationships between members of staff and students and among the students themselves. It is the bedrock on which so much else is built and is fundamental to a number of very positive characteristics in the lessons seen. There is a high level of respect by students for their teachers and, when this respect is established the girls are more likely to work with interest and enthusiasm. Some of the unsatisfactory teaching seen was where a temporary teacher was still getting to know the class.
23. The quality of the relationships in many lessons allows the teacher to establish a friendly atmosphere and a sympathetic style balanced by unobtrusive control. As a consequence little teacher time is lost in overt control and behaviour management. If required, they adopt a positive and usually successful approach to managing behaviour. Humour and praise are used effectively and this reinforces students' very positive attitudes to the subject. Members of staff work hard to develop students' sense of self-esteem and confidence. Many members of staff listen carefully to what students have to say and signal by their eye contact and the way they listen that they regard what the pupil has to say as being very important. They model good listening skills and validate the point the pupil has made by praise, perhaps referring it back to a point made by a pupil earlier or by making a note of it on the whiteboard.
24. In a personal, social and health education lesson, the ground rules for discussion work were developed by the class- the teacher reminding everyone that in this class 'we respect other people's point of view' and stressed the need for confidentiality- 'no name no blame'. Students are used to these ground rules and the result is that they can talk and discuss in a very mature way about sensitive issues within personal, social and health education but also in other

lessons too. They are able to build on points made by other girls, using phrases such as 'Just to reinforce what Zahra said...' Students are used to working with each other and display a maturity of approach when given the opportunity. Group work such as this provides opportunities for all students to rehearse and try out their ideas with their classmates. This was particularly helpful for students who have English as an additional language.

25. Good lessons were often characterised by the rigour of students' thinking. In less successful lessons, although students were engaged in completing tasks, not much more was expected of them. In some cases, more effective use could have been made of the whole class review at the end of the lesson to analyse what had been achieved not only in terms of tasks completed but how the tasks helped develop the students' thinking about the subject.
26. Thinking skills are developed through questioning. Teachers' questioning skills are usually good, with teachers using a combination of 'closed' questions, where the teacher was trying to check on a fact, and more 'open' questions, which asked the students to make a more extended response and perhaps express an idea or a viewpoint. Only in a few lessons was questioning totally 'closed' with the consequence that students were only expected to give the right answer rather than give a reasoned extended reply. Questioning is often successfully used to establish what the class can remember about the lesson before and to focus them on the current work. In modern languages the brisk pace of questioning using the target language ensures that students concentrate and that there is a high level of challenge and, as a consequence, sense of achievement.
27. Students at the school work well when they have a clear idea of what the lesson is going to be about and how it fits into what they did before. Many teachers share the objectives of the lesson with the class. For example, in one excellent mathematics lesson, the teacher discussed with the class which objectives had been achieved as the lesson progressed. For many teachers who used this approach it also gave the beginning of the lesson a very business-like start.
28. Good or better lessons were taught in a lively, often enthusiastic manner that held students' attention. In these lessons, the teachers used a variety of strategies and approaches, making effective use of resources and often imaginative approaches to ensure that students were actively engaged in the lessons. There was a greater variety of participative approaches with students aged 11 to 14 than with older students and is one reason why teaching and learning was somewhat better than with older students.
29. Across the school homework is used well to support and extend what has been learnt in class. It is monitored effectively at all levels and seen as an important feature of school life. Occasionally expectations could be raised regarding what has been set but overall the work set is pertinent and successfully extends the learning opportunities.
30. A numeracy policy exists, but needs to be updated to ensure that students' numerical skills and understanding are progressively developed in a consistent and coherent way across the school. In science the use of numerical skills is not extensive. However, when required, students have appropriate skills. For example in science students aged 11 to 14 show good graphical skills and older students can substitute numbers into formulae correctly. On the other hand in design technology pupils' numerical work lacks accuracy, and opportunities to develop numerical skills in this subject are not developed.
31. The teaching of literacy skills across the subjects of the curriculum is, overall, satisfactory. Many teachers have good blackboard or whiteboard skills, and the majority insist on good presentation of written work and on appropriate language in speech. In the best lessons, the teacher encouraged students to adopt a more formal register when replying to a question. One girl reminded the class of one of the ground rules in a personal, social and health education lesson which was not to use slang 'because not everyone will know what you mean.' The insistence on the use of correct terminology meant that students developed the vocabulary to develop the rigour of their thinking skill. A key element in the further raising of standards is the development within the school of a richer reading culture in order to give a wider cultural and language context breadth of experience to students.



32. There are three main ways in which the quality of teaching and students' learning can be further improved. The first is developing strategies to match the work to the wide range of attainment within teaching groups. Most teachers are aware of the differing levels of attainment and the additional needs of students in their class. There were good examples where the lesson provided varying degree of challenge and the work was matched carefully to the students' needs. There were also good examples where the learning support assistant had developed very good teamwork with the teacher and provided clear support to students. Nevertheless, the use of individual education plans to target learning and the classroom support provided by learning support assistants remains variable. There is a clear strategic role for the special educational needs co-ordinator to monitor the use of both to ensure that good practice is shared amongst departments.
33. There were also examples in the lessons, for example in history and geography, where abler students and those students identified as gifted or talented are challenged further by extension materials but this is, on the whole, less frequent within other classes other than by the pace, or the expected level of independence that the students are expected to work at. Overall, abler students and those students identified as gifted and talented make satisfactory progress.
34. Although rightly the school is proud of the increased percentage of students achieving A\* to C grades at GCSE and the improvements in 2002, the challenge remains to improve the learning for the 'average' pupil. This must include students whose first language is English if the average point score is to show overall improvement. In the concern to provide the needed appropriate support to students with more apparent additional needs, the needs of those who do not fall at the extremes are not being met sufficiently to improve the average point score or percentage of the A\* to G grades.
35. The second area of improvement is through more effective use of assessment. There are departments in the school, history, geography drama and modern languages that make very good use of assessment as a means of accelerating learning. In these subjects students have a very clear idea of how well they are doing and what they have to do next in order to improve.
36. Girls value the academic tutoring which takes place. It clearly is a means of ensuring that they take responsibility for their learning. 'Its down to us', as one put it. It fosters very successfully students' independence. Yet what holds back attainment at GCSE relates to subject-specific detail. The reason why students do relatively well in humanities subjects is because they are taught, through the assessment process as much as by the lessons, to establish the clear structure to the essay, or ensure that there is sufficient use made of the detail of the historical evidence. Across the school there is a clear need to promote higher standards through developmental marking, the sharing of evaluation, and the setting and frequent review of detailed targets.
37. The third aspect relates to a number of issues surrounding the timetabling. The length of period that the school uses is 45 or 50 minutes but the majority of periods are double periods. It is a long time and pupil concentration can wane towards the end, even in very good lessons and with abler students. For those students who do not find learning that easy it can be a very long time. The length of lesson also means that, for some subjects, in a particular week, that students have fewer opportunities to revisit the subject. Year 7 students for example have mathematics twice in a week. It also places particular difficulties on the person responsible for the timetable to ensure that there is a balance of activities and associated learning skills used across a day. Currently, for example, a Year 8 class experiences history, English and geography on one particular day and might be expected to synthesise a range of material and draw conclusions in all of them. For some subjects, such as mathematics and modern languages, learning would be better served by shorter more regular sessions. The problem of potential structural discontinuity is further compounded by the fact that the school uses a ten-day timetable. Some classes will inevitably have their lessons towards the end of week A and early in week B so that there is a significant gap between them.
38. The school has adopted what it refers to as a 'setting' policy but is in fact streaming in order to reduce the wide spread of attainment within classes and to target effectively the range of support to students with additional needs. Individual subjects, such as mathematics, science or

English have to rely on inter-department discussion to move students within groups. The result is that in mathematics, for example, there were students who were not in 'sets' that coincided with their ability. In modern languages the problem is somewhat magnified. In order to ensure efficient targeting of resources students with English as an additional language are often placed in the lower attaining groups. The result is that some students with English as an additional language but with a good, often fluent, command of French or Spanish are placed in lower sets. It also means that, by the time students reach Year 9, there is a wide spread of ability in teaching groups because these English as an additional language students have a developed facility for language learning through their developing bi-lingual skills. Because these students also make good progress in learning English the automatic placement in the lower groups does not, after a time, give due accord to their attainment in a subject such as mathematics or science. The net result is that the range of attainment in a group can be very wide for a specific subject.

39. Some teachers assume that the grouping arrangements are narrowing the attainment range within the class, which is clearly not the case within a specific subject. They therefore tend to teach to the whole class and rely on the groupings to allow them to use the same material to all the class. In one or two cases not only was the same material used but it was also presented in a similar manner to upper and lower groups. In addition whilst behaviour is good and often very good in the majority of classes, the arrangements of the groups do bring together a one group of girls who share less positive attitudes to learning and who need more careful management of their behaviour in Years 9 and 10. A significant proportion of these girls are white UK girls and it raises the further question whether groupings are solely based on attainment or whether there are behavioural reasons for their eventual placement.

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

***The quality and range of learning opportunities have significant strengths and some weaknesses and are satisfactory overall. A key strength is the overall high quality of provision for students' personal development. A weakness is that students are not receiving their full curriculum entitlement at Key Stage 4 with regard to modern foreign languages and design and technology.***

40. In both key stages there is excellent provision for personal, social and health education. The course is particularly well structured and taught very well. It has high status in the school and is valued by the students. Sensitive to the girls' diversity of culture views and beliefs, it nevertheless successfully provides an excellent forum where issues such as those related to sexual responsibility, health, (including drug misuse) are explored by establishing that such issues are important to all students. Girls are taught to value other beliefs and values and, by establishing very clear parameters and ground rules for discussion, they display considerable maturity in their thinking about such issues. One way in which the school's involvement in the Healthy Schools initiative has been effective is by a committee of students deciding how to spend money that was allocated for improving the school environment. Year 10 students, working alongside the police, have planned and delivered lessons on drug education to Year 6 students in neighbouring primary schools. The personal, social and health education co-ordinator has recently been accredited to train other teachers through the Department for Education and Skills Sex and Relationships pilot project. Until this year the school took part in the Teenage Pregnancy project but the organisers feel that the staff in school have sufficient expertise to cover the topic themselves.
41. The academic tutoring lessons in each year group play an important part in the monitoring and guidance of students' progress and are highly valued by the students. Careers education is very good. The organisation of the taught careers programme within personal, social and health education in each year group from Year 7 to Year 11 is very good. Interesting developments include the use of laptop computers in lessons to access careers and college websites and plans for a pilot scheme for the careers service to interview all Year 8 students.

The administration of work experience is excellent and work experience is integrated into the personal, social and health education lessons. The careers library is accessible to students, up-to-date and welcoming. Careers education in the school is received very positively by all groups of girls and they recognise its role in raising their aspirations.

42. The overall provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision for students' development is good and there are some strong features. The very strong commitment by the school towards all students and the overall very high quality of relationships and mutual respect ensures that all students are made to feel cared for, valued, respected and listened to. They are made welcome and included and the school works hard at reinforcing all these aspects not only in lessons but, as importantly, within informal meetings in corridors and the way they are talked to in assembly. It is the visible expression of the school's commitment to equal opportunities. In no small measure is this due to the fact that the headteacher is frequently seen around the school. She ensures she is on duty in the dining room at lunchtime, not so much to ensure discipline as to provide her with a positive opportunity for a quiet word or smile to individual students. Students are used to seeing her and other members of staff around and they have the confidence to approach and discuss with her matters of concern. Students in discussion stressed that the school listened to their point of view and place high value on the school and the support they receive. This high quality of care and concern for individuals and the consistent approach to raising students' sense of self-esteem and personal worth means that spiritual provision is good and binds together the different aspects of provision for the girls' personal development.
43. The school provision for moral development is very good. The school has a very strong moral climate. It has established successfully a very strong ethos, which keeps any tensions that may exist in the wider community at bay. The school is a strong community, proud of its diversity, sensitive to individual difference, yet managing to establish its own code of common expectations that are based on respect for others. Within the curriculum the moral dimension of such issues as green issues, apartheid, slavery and exploration of the ethical codes of the world's major religions and exploration of personal responsibility in the face of peer pressure reinforce this very strong moral climate.
44. The provision for social development is good and aspects of it very good. The school council is very effective and provides a powerful example of democracy in action. It assumes, for example, responsibility for making some financial decisions on how particular funds will be spent as well as presenting the views of the pupil body. Because of the current situation regarding physical education, it is missing some social opportunities but students are taught to work well together in groups. Girls are confident and assertive. The school makes them aware of their rights but also their responsibilities. They work well together and are generous in applauding the success of others. Many have high aspirations and almost all want to do well. Class discussions expect maturity from the girls and they respond well. Girls also display maturity, in their understanding that individuals may have particular additional needs, because the school actively encourages them to think that way. They include others rather than excluding them. They take responsibility well when given the opportunity. Some are trained as mediators and provide counselling and support to others.
45. The cultural provision is good. In history considerable thought has been given to presenting a range of histories including the history of the UK. In English the range of novels that the girls explore has been carefully considered. In art students explore a wide range of influences to develop their ideas. The school has considered carefully, in most areas, the variety of cultures within the school and works to find ways to reflect them both within the curriculum and in special events. Western European and specifically UK culture does play an important part in this consideration. Whilst appreciating fully the sensitivities, difficulties and elusiveness of the concept, the low attainment of many white UK girls suggests that more needs to be done to help them engage with the educational opportunities within the school.
46. The curriculum in Key Stage 3 is on the whole broad and balanced and is enhanced by the inclusion of drama. However, the requirements of the National Curriculum are not met in full in technology and there is not enough time for physical education. In Key Stage 4 there is sufficient provision for students of all abilities and a broad range of subjects is available to

students, although staffing difficulties have meant that food technology cannot be offered at present. However, many students do not follow a balanced programme because the options system does not require it. This is now under review. The statutory National Curriculum is not in place in technology and modern foreign languages, as the options system allows students not to take these subjects. The school has not conformed to the guidelines for the disapplication of the National Curriculum for these students. The religious education of students following the alternative certificate course also does not satisfy requirements. There is insufficient time for physical education. On the other hand, the GNVQ course in health and social care extends and enriches the girls who take it by engaging them in different learning styles; this course now attracts students of higher ability than at the last inspection. Three students are taking catering and construction courses at a local college instead of the school's options but at the time of the inspection arrangements for monitoring their progress were unsatisfactory.

47. There are weaknesses in the construction of the school timetable, resulting in uneven distribution of lessons through the two-week cycle in a number of subjects, such as modern foreign languages and geography. The arrangements for grouping students in subjects mean that some students are inaccurately placed. Students with English as an additional language are put in lower attaining groups in order to target the support for them accurately but this means that, in modern languages, for example, fluent speakers of French or Spanish sit alongside students who still are finding learning French difficult. Movement between the groups requires inter-departmental co-operation.
48. The school offers a good range of activities that take place outside the school day, off site or involve visiting groups, organisations or individuals. Although the provision for competitive sport remains very limited and the school identifies difficulties in whole school drama productions there are activities offered by teachers or through links with external agencies. Examples include sports links with the local authority, which allows the school to access local community programmes for the development of football and kick-boxing, street dance delivered as part of a community based cultural programme and lessons in Arabic are funded through the EiCAZ. The school focuses appropriately on language development and encourages the learning of heritage languages to examination level. Links with local primary schools are strong with link projects featuring throughout the year. In addition the school organises a programme of 'extension and enrichment' where each subject offers extra opportunities on a weekly basis. Although some of these sessions focus on additional study for examination groups, others offer more varied opportunities including clay work in art, musical activities such as choir and steel pans and a reading club. Extension work for those students identified as 'gifted and talented' is available in music and other subjects. In addition there are opportunities for booster classes and revision programmes. The school and partners in the EiCAZ have also operated a successful summer school for students identified as gifted and talented.

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

***The school provides a very caring and secure environment within which the students' learning can flourish.***

49. The school has very good procedures for child protection and ensuring the welfare of its students. This is another strength of the school as it was at the previous inspection. The deputy headteacher is the named and trained child protection person. All the deputy headteachers and heads of each year have also been trained. The headteacher and her senior management team have also ensured that all remaining staff is very well briefed on any relevant concerns. All new teachers receive child protection training as part of their induction. An updated written policy is used. There is very good liaison with the local social services. The school has one 'pupil in care' in the custody of the local authority and there is close liaison over her care. The school has an up-to-date Internet Safety Policy.
50. The headteacher is the trained health and safety person for the school. She has ensured that there is a detailed written policy and up to date risk assessment documents. At present there is no such document for the physical education department. All fire-fighting, physical educational

and portable electrical equipment is in date and checked. Fire exercises are held at least once a term and are recorded. The fire brigade visit the school quite regularly and all escape routes from the building are marked and accessible.

51. The school has efficient and caring accident procedures. There is a detailed medicines policy and a comfortable medical room, although, because of where the room is sited and staffing requirements, students are placed in the school office. There are currently two trained first aid personnel but other members of staff have had basic first aid training. Very good use is made of outside professional help such as educational psychologists, behaviour support personnel, the school nurse and the youth inclusion and youth offending teams. The local police come in regularly as part of the personal, social and health programme and talk to students about alcohol, drugs, crime and consequences. The students also have regular access to a counsellor. The students are well supported at break and lunchtimes and are well aware of whom to turn to in an emergency. They are confident to talk to a member of staff if they have a problem and there is in addition a peer mediation service if they would rather talk to an older girl in confidence.
52. The school has very good procedures for monitoring and improving attendance and these procedures are shown to have worked by the now improved attendance figures. Persistent non-attenders are no longer the problem that made this a key issue in the previous report. All classes maintain registers clearly marked both morning and afternoon and returned to the office for double-checking. These are also scrutinised regularly by the heads of year and the deputy headteacher (students). Internal registration is maintained on laptop computers. All parents are made very well aware of their relevant responsibilities. Very good use is made of the educational social worker who is also the home links officer. Through the EiCAZ the school has been able to establish outreach work with particular communities. The school very carefully analyses all separate year figures. Various attendance certificates are awarded at assemblies and these do work as students and classes are proud to pick them up. The school maintains a very tight lateness routine.
53. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and also for eliminating that of an oppressive nature are both very good within the school. The school has up-to-date and separate written policies for each aspect. The behaviour policy has realistic awards and sanctions of which all staff and students are well aware. In addition each class has a 'code of conduct' to which the girls conform. During the inspection newly arrived Year 7 girls were setting up their relevant contract with their teacher as part of a personal and social education lesson. The home/school agreement that parents and students sign is also part of this contract. When necessary with an individual pupil, teachers maintain positive behaviour records, which are required to be signed several times a day by an adult, including parents. Other teachers also use the soccer analogy of yellow and red cards and 'off the pitch'. Parents are informed by card of positive, improving behaviour. Various merit stickers can be accumulated to warrant a prize. The ultimate accolade is commendations, mentions at assembly and the headteacher's honours board. Very serious bad behaviour can result in a points-card finally leading to exclusion.
54. Bullying is well dealt with in assemblies and specific personal social education lessons and students admit that they are given confidence to report any incidents to staff. Since summer 2000 the training of Peer Mediators has also helped the situation. Members of staff are well aware of how to 'nip a situation in the bud' and parents are fully involved where necessary.
55. The school also has very good procedures for monitoring and supporting students' personal development. The excellent personal, social and health education programme is a substantial part of the curriculum. Academic tutoring is timetabled once a week for each child, who can also see the visiting counsellor without appointment. Tutors closely monitor students' development and each pupil possesses an updated record of personal achievement. Parents are regularly informed of progress through the academic progress days and the reports.
56. The procedures for assessing students' attainment and progress are good. Students are regularly tested in each subject and the results of these tests are recorded and analysed centrally so that progress between assessments by individuals and groups of students can be

judged. Using their laptop computers teachers within departments have access to this and to other information such as end of key stage results. The school development plan focuses on raising achievement of different groups within the school for example, students in the middle ability groups. There is an initiative in the school to develop provision for the most able in the school. However these data are not yet used effectively to evaluate the impact of the curriculum on the achievement of individual students and groups of students. The link between curriculum planning and assessment is unclear.

57. Marking across the school is variable. In some subjects such as history and geography marking is detailed and includes feedback on how students can improve their work. In some departments, such as mathematics, where there have been a number of changes in staff, marking is inconsistent. In other departments, such as design technology, students' work is not assessed against National Curriculum standards. However there is good practice in other subjects such as music, where procedures for assessment are carried out well and link clearly to National Curriculum levels.
58. All subject teachers regularly set two targets for each pupil they teach, using a menu of subject related generic targets. Form tutors then use the targets to review the progress of each pupil in their tutor group on an individual basis. The assessment procedures in modern foreign languages are very strong. Teachers in this department have a good understanding of National Curriculum levels and GCSE criteria; students' work is assessed against these levels and criteria. Targets for students are set which enable both teachers and students to review and record their own progress and achievement. In history and geography there are clear targets related to the National Curriculum, which are used effectively to demonstrate to students how they can improve their standards. However in other subjects such as science and English the development of such targets is at an early stage. Consequently although there is good practice within the school the use of targets that are closely related to specific subject skills, knowledge and understanding are underdeveloped. The link between targets and National Curriculum or GCSE criteria is not secure in all departments. In only a few departments are students made aware of what specific steps they can take to improve their level or grade.

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

***The majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire have a strong belief in the school and the work it does in supporting their child. Overall, the school has good effective links with its parents and these links enhance the students' chances of successfully learning in the school.***

59. Parents particularly like the way that the school expects their child to work hard, achieve of her best and become a mature and responsible citizen. They say that their child likes school, is making good progress and that behaviour is good. They also believe that the school is well led and managed, provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons and that they, as parents, feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. A minority of parents felt that they were not kept well informed of how their child is getting on, that the school did not work closely with parents and that there were issues about homework. The inspection agrees with the positive views. The school sets homework regularly and it is monitored carefully. Overall, homework is good and extends learning. The school does value the partnership with parents. The inspection team received one letter from a parent who suggested that she could help her daughter and the school more if there were better information aimed at parental inclusion. The quality of information sent to parents is satisfactory, although reports could be improved.
60. The quality of information that the school provides for its parents is satisfactory. Each parent receives an up-to-date copy of the prospectus and an annual governors' report. Both documents comply fully with current statutory requirements. There are two academic progress days when their child's progress is discussed and at the most recent one eight parents in ten turned up. However, the written reports, as they stand, are not entirely helpful, in that they are not sharp or focused enough but these are not issued to parents until they have been talked through with the form tutor. Parents additionally receive regular informative newsletters. Key

documentation is available on request. There is a Year 11 curriculum evening and guidance on coursework deadlines for GCSE. The school tries to be open and accessible. Teachers often communicate directly with parents if there is an issue. The school provides all documentation in the parents' mother tongue and there are translation services available. The latest initiative is for parents to attend the family study centre and take a computer course in their own language. As a spin off from this many parents are now learning to speak English.

61. Although the role of parents in supporting the aspirations of their daughters is difficult to quantify it is felt that the contribution of parents to children's learning at home and at school is good. The school sees this as an important element and seeks to foster strong co-operation from parents. Parents have a very wide, personal experience of schools and education but are often united by a common understanding, that learning English and doing well, are important features of their daughters' lives. Many parents, who willingly contribute to the provision of food, dress and music, attend the annual celebration of Eid. At academic progress days all parents are asked to indicate how they will help their children at home. Each pupil has a home/school homework diary and this provides opportunity for two-way communication.

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

***The headteacher leads the school very well. Overall management is good. The school has a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. It is moving towards providing good value for money. The school is an effective school.***

62. The headteacher provides very strong and effective leadership. What drives the school and fuels its energy is the determination of the headteacher in particular but also of others, that the school will make a difference to the students for whom it caters. From this stems the very strong ethos of the school, which values the individual student, ensuring that, whatever tensions might exist in the wider community, within the diverse but united community of the school, all students are important, valued and respected. From this also stems the commitment to raising standards.
63. Overall, the school is well managed. There has been good improvement in this aspect since the last inspection. The school carefully evaluates what it is doing and has a clear sense of direction. It is very aware of what it does well and what it needs to do in the future. Its systems for self-evaluation are very effective and developing in sophistication as the school develops quality information. Teaching and learning are monitored well. The development plan to effect change is precise and is an effective tool in determining where individuals and groups will put their energies to tackle the school's priorities. It is effective because members of staff know the school's priorities and how these are reflected in the plan, have participated in its construction, are clear about their roles in progressing it, have clear criteria to know when they have been successful and there are effective processes to monitor departments' progress in achieving it.
64. A particular feature of the school is the way that the various strands of funding and initiatives have been plaited together to provide effective support for students, with the result that the budget reflects very well the school's educational priorities. The school has worked to reduce the size of teaching groups, particularly of the lower attaining students, in order to target students' needs. Specific grants are used effectively for the purposes for which they are intended. The governing body fulfils its financial responsibilities effectively. The headteacher and general manager present thorough reports to the governors' finance committee at regular intervals.
65. Financial administration is very rigorous and secure. A few minor points raised in the auditor's report have been put into effect. The school applies the principle of best value and evaluates the quality and cost in all expenditure. It makes effective use of comparative data to compare and internally challenge the school's performance. Proportions of the budget allocated under different headings are in line with spending patterns across the Borough. The carry forward from year to year has provided an essential contingency, for example when supply teacher costs have been high, and allows for more secure longer-term planning.

66. Staff induction, and ongoing professional development are part of the school's philosophy. The school has a professional openness that acknowledges the need to develop and hone professional skills. The school has an established history of performance management. Good procedures are firmly in place, well accepted by staff and overseen by the headteacher, who sees them not only as a means to raise the quality of provision, but also as a way in which teachers' personal and professional needs may be met. There is a clear structure of line management and, in the annual cycle of performance review, objectives are set, observations are recorded, and achievements are evaluated. Teachers' training needs are ascertained through performance reviews, the priorities of the school development plan, national requirements and teachers' personal requests. There is a useful induction booklet for all new staff, and newly qualified teachers have a slightly reduced teaching load. They have frequent and regular meetings with senior staff for both support and training. The school also undertakes the training of both unqualified graduates and overseas teachers, to the benefit both of the school and of those teachers. The school's provision for the professional development of staff is good, and contributes significantly to their effectiveness as teachers.
67. Overall, the governing body is committed and involved and takes its responsibilities seriously. At the time of the inspection parents were under-represented on the governing body and members felt that an important voice was missing. Not all members are able to attend on a regular basis and the workload falls to a core of governors. The chair is particularly committed to the school and is a focus for informal and formal support for the headteacher. She ensures that the committee structure works effectively to support the school and provide the necessary questioning. The governing body have a good understanding of governance and their non-executive director role based on trust by the governing body in the senior management team and the headteacher. They in turn respect the governing body and the role they have. Further thought by the governing body as to how they can specifically contribute to the school's self-evaluation process would give a sharper focus to their involvement in the school and for their visits. Although there are some aspects of the curriculum that do not meet statutory requirements, they have, overall, a good understanding of the strengths of the school and its priorities for development. Nevertheless, an executive summary of the school improvement plan would be useful for the governing body in order for them retain a strategic overview of the school's priorities and not get overwhelmed by the operational professional detail it necessarily contains.
68. The current staffing has stabilised. Members of staff are qualified either by experience or training. Recruiting specialist staff has been difficult in the recent past in some specific subject areas and has slowed developments. The school has made significant investments in computers and the current low ratio of students per computer is well ahead of national targets. The school library - a very large and pleasant space - is, however, insufficiently stocked and used. Students may visit it "for work or relaxation", as the teacher in charge put it, at breaks or lunchtime, and some students may work there after school. However, the number of books issued every week is low, and this suggests that a culture of literacy - of regular, frequent reading and the love of books - needs further development. Departments have sufficient textbooks, or they were on order, for class use but not enough to allow students to take them home in some areas. The school building is a mixture of older and more modern buildings. The older part of the school has grandeur but is not an easy space to work in. Aspects of accommodation are unsatisfactory- some teaching spaces are cramped and there are difficulties with food preparation in design and technology. The school is aware of these difficulties and is working to improve some spaces such a geography room.
69. The school is effective. The school provides value for money but quantifying this further is difficult. The overall unit cost is well above average, reflecting the needs of students. The recent increased funding is helping the school raise standards but the impact has still to work through. Aspects of its work are very good: particularly those aspects concerned with the care and guidance of students and the very good attitudes which the girls have as a result, the very inclusive nature of the school, the creation of a strong community, and the significantly improved examination performance. In the overall percentage of students gaining 5+ A\* to C grades Fulham Cross is now well above similar schools. However, these very positive factors are balanced by the fact that overall performance at GCSE is average compared to similar schools and that the subject provision in design and technology and physical education is



unsatisfactory. The last report judged the overall value for money as being satisfactory but with the potential to move to good value. The school is moving towards providing good value for money but at the moment the overall provision is satisfactory.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

70. In order to raise students' attainment and overall achievement and build on the many strengths and areas of good practice within the school, the headteacher, governing body and members of staff should address the following:
- (1) To raise overall standards at GCSE further the headteacher, governing body and staff should ensure that:
    - a) the needs of the middle attaining students, often the 'quiet achievers' are met, whilst maintaining the support for those students with additional needs;  
*(paragraphs: 5, 8 34)*
    - b) White UK girls are encouraged to take advantage of the educational opportunities within school in order to raise their achievement;  
*(paragraphs: 6, 8 45)*
    - c) teachers meet the needs of students by appropriate differentiation and are not over-reliant on grouping structures;  
*(paragraphs: 32, 33 39)*
    - d) students know what it is they have to do in order to improve;  
*(paragraphs: 35,36)*
    - e) setting is organised in the school so that groups more accurately reflect students' attainment in a subject and the timetable is organised to reduce the discontinuities in learning;  
*(paragraph: 38)*
    - f) a reading culture is developed within the school.  
*(paragraph: 31)*
  - (2) Improve the overall provision in
    - a) design and technology and
    - b) physical education.  
*(paragraph: 12 and subject reports)*
  - (3) Ensure that the statutory requirements in the curriculum and identified in the subject reports are met.  
*(paragraph: 46)*

## THE PROVISION FOR STUDENTS WITH ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

Overall, the quality of provision in English as an additional language is **good**.

### Strengths

- The students make good progress from one language stage to the next
- The department is well organised
- The department makes a significant contribution to the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Areas for improvement

- The students who are not targeted for support would benefit from more differentiated work
- Teachers of English as an additional language should continue to find ways to contribute to the overall quality of teaching in class situations where it is not always possible to make a verbal input without disrupting the rest of the class
- Produce a concise statement which details the work of the department

71. Students who have English as a second language make good progress in the school. In year 2002, all students who had English as a second language were entered for at least 5 GCSEs. One pupil at stage 2 of learning gained more than 5 GCSEs between grades A\* and G, and another student at stage 3 of learning gained more than 5 GCSEs above grade C. In year 9, all students of English as an additional language targeted for support gained a level 3 in at least two of their National Curriculum tests. In year 2001 at the end of Year 9, students at stage 3 and 4 in English language learning did better than students who speak English as a first language. At the end of Year 11, two thirds of students at stage 4 language learning gained 5 or more GCSEs in the higher grades of A\* to C. This is in comparison with the one in five of students who have English as a first language.
72. At present in the school, nearly two thirds of the students have English as an additional language. There are about 48 students who are at an early stage of acquisition. All these particular students have targeted support in English, maths and science as well as in other subjects such as religious education, history and geography and any other subject, which has heavy reliance on language. Withdrawal from lessons is minimal so almost all of the department's work is done in support work during normal lessons. Casual entrants may be withdrawn for some time during the week but they are quickly integrated into the normal timetable when they are ready. This is part of the department's policy and it ensures that the new entrants feel properly integrated into the broader social life of the school. The students who are on the target register are given targets – a minimum of two - and are regularly monitored by the teachers of English as an additional language and new targets set when necessary. This ensures that their progress is sure and purposeful. The normal class teachers support students who are not on the target register in their everyday lessons. These teachers have been supplied with detailed information from the English as an additional language department so that they are aware of who the students with English as an additional language are and what level of help and support they need. Twice a term, information regarding the progress of students with English as an additional language is forwarded to the Borough.
73. Overall the quality of teaching by the two specialist teachers is good and sometimes very good. The teachers are aware of the needs of the target students and they liaise with the subject departments and prepare work accordingly, often in the form of simplified materials. The teachers encourage the students to practise and develop a good range of language skills, including writing and conversation. At times in many lessons where the teachers of English as an additional language were giving support, the lessons required a significantly long verbal introduction by the general class teacher. In these circumstances it is often difficult for the support teachers to operate without disrupting the rest of the class. Extending the silent simultaneous teaching method, noting for example key words on the board, enables the students still to benefit from the skills and knowledge of their teachers of English as an additional language at the same time without disturbing the work of others. This method is of benefit to all students in consolidating the work of the class teacher as well as helping to raise literacy levels of all students. In the classes where the teachers of English as an additional language cannot be present but where there are students who have English as an additional language more work needs to be done by the general subject teachers in providing differentiated materials for these students so that they can achieve their potential and be more fully involved in the lessons.
74. The students respond very positively to their teachers and they are keen to make the most of the opportunities presented to them. They are always well behaved and they apply themselves well to the work in hand. Their motivation is evidenced in their general good achievement and by their results in public examinations.

75. The department is well led and there is good documentation, which includes a development plan as well as detailed information on the students of English as additional language students. A simple overview of the work and processes of the department would be a useful addition to this documentation. The staffing of only two with such a high percentage of English as an additional language students means that their time and skills are considerably stretched. Nevertheless the department deals very well with this situation. No significant issues were raised at the last inspection. The accommodation is very good. The resources are also very good and include TVs, videos, computers and new textbooks and dictionaries. The department actively encourages the use of information technology and the students enjoy doing this type of work. The department makes a significant contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision of the school. For example, the enrichment class during the week and the general open nature of the department makes the students feel welcome and secure in the school. Other activities such as trips to the Natural History Museum and involvement in celebrations such as Eid also help the students to integrate well into the wider life of the school.

## THE PROVISION FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Overall provision for students with special educational needs is **satisfactory**.

### Strengths

- Students with special educational needs make good progress.
- There is much good practice.

### Areas for improvement

- Development of more formalised links with departments.
- Development of the strategic role of the special educational needs co-ordinator to monitor the use of individual education plans and classroom support in order to develop more consistent approaches.
- Helping departments develop work which matches the needs of the students.

76. There are 151 students currently on the special needs register, with 90 at School Action level, 51 at School Action plus and only 10 with statements of special educational needs. Of those at School Action Plus level, the great majority have specific learning difficulty (dyslexia) and emotional and behavioural difficulties. All who have special needs are included on the register and the department tries to distinguish carefully between those with special needs and those whose needs are language based.
77. All Year 11 students on the special educational needs register last year were entered for at least one GCSE examination. Of 24 entries on the register 15 gained passes in English, maths and science. All but one gained a pass in at least one core subject. Students' examination grades exceeded the estimated grade more often than not and 20 of those on the Year 11 register augmented their qualifications with a range of good passes at Certificate of Education level showing that students with special educational needs attain well. Overall, students with special educational needs make good progress. Progress in English, maths, geography, history and drama is good. In modern languages lessons progress is very good and it is good in the learning support unit. Elsewhere progress is satisfactory and only in physical education is the progress of students with special educational needs unsatisfactory.
78. The learning support unit accepts students who are having temporary learning difficulties. Students follow their normal curriculum with work supplied by subject departments. Time spent in the unit rarely exceeds 15 lessons and is more often 6 or 8 a week and these times are co-ordinated to fit the mainstream timetable. The unit provides a small but well organised and friendly base for students with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Students are well motivated and make good progress in the unit. It is a valuable asset to the school. Students who are taught within the learning support unit are very well behaved, despite the fact that they are referred for behavioural and emotional reasons. They show very positive attitudes and make the most of the opportunity to work in a calm and friendly atmosphere progressing well and enjoying learning. In lower attaining sets in mainstream lessons the behaviour of the majority is good and sometimes very good. Where there is poorer behaviour and lack of motivation it is

sometimes aggravated by a lack of effective support. Students are generally interested and show good attitudes to the work and to the teachers in whom they have confidence. The majority enjoy lessons, concentrate and treat each other with respect. They are able to discuss their work in positive terms. Relationships between students and students and teachers can be very good

79. Students with special needs are taught almost entirely in classes in which they are integrated with their peers. Complementary forms of additional provision support their learning. In extreme cases some students with severe literacy difficulties may be taught in withdrawal groups in the Flexible Learning Base but the great majority are taught in mainstream classes in which help is provided by support teachers and support assistants. Deployment is good and all students with statements of special educational needs receive appropriate help. The effectiveness of support varies from subject to subject. In English some of the support was ineffective, depriving some students of valuable one to one support while the class teacher was talking. Some learning support assistants appeared to have insufficient knowledge of the curriculum and how to approach the task. A totally different picture is revealed in other lessons, sometimes in the same department. There was good progress by special educational needs students, as a result of effective support from learning support assistants in mathematics and ICT. In a Year 9 languages lesson support was very good. More guidance from the special educational needs co-ordinator is required to ensure a uniformly high level of support across the curriculum. Liaison is often good, but is too variable between departments. More formalised meetings with departments and the use of negotiated contracts of provision, in order to focus skills within subject areas, could further improve quality of provision.
80. At School Action level students' needs are covered by group education plans. Those students at School Action Plus level are mainly included on the register for behavioural and emotional difficulties and all have individual education plans drawn up by the learning support unit. All stated students have individual educational plans.
81. The rather variable nature of some provision is illustrated by the way in which individual education plans are used. There is much good practice. Subject departments are well aware of those students with special needs and inspectors report very good use and understanding of individual education plans in modern foreign languages and history. In geography teachers are very aware of students' special needs but in mathematics individual education plans are available, but not used. Regular monitoring of how individual education plans are used in lessons would help some departments feel more confident about their use.
82. Students with special educational needs are fully integrated into all aspects of school life and have access to the full curriculum. The need to clarify the use of classroom support and management of individual education plans is recognised by the department and noted in the minutes of a special educational needs department meeting on 29 January 2002. Work seen in Year 7 is very encouraging and suggests that provision is improving.
83. The school meets the statutory requirements for provision as outlined in students' statements of special educational needs. The department has switched to the new Code of Practice and is revising individual education plans. It needs to ensure that the rest of the school is aware of developments. The special educational needs register is up-to-date, though still using the old format of Stages 1 to 5. This, and assessment information, is readily available to all staff. Although there are deficiencies in some areas of provision, mainly to do with uniformity and training, there is good tracking of progress for those on the register. Reviews of individual education plans and statements are planned carefully, dated and carried out. Special provision is regularly applied for and obtained for special educational needs students sitting examinations. This takes the form of 25 per cent extra time.
84. Students with special educational needs are carefully identified at their primary schools and good contacts through primary visits are maintained. On entry all students are tested in reading, spelling and cognitive abilities and results are used to organise Year 7 sets. A teacher, funded by the EiCAZ provides good continuity by teaching Year 7 students and Year 6 students in the three partner schools, developing materials and strategies to assist in the

transition process. Parents are kept informed of all developments regarding the support and progress of students on the special educational needs register and in the support unit. Parents are invited to all reviews and a majority attend. Other activities are less well attended.

85. Legal requirements for students with special educational needs are met. A governor is appointed with responsibility for special educational needs and attends regular meetings. Documentation is thorough and improving and policy documents form an important part of the school's information. The special educational needs co-ordinator is gradually moving the whole school forward in its provision for special educational needs, but there are still some obvious areas for further improvement in the monitoring of the way the special educational needs and subject departments work together. There is good liaison and a close relationship with the local authority and the school receives valuable input from a range of outside agencies. Departmental documentation contains good job descriptions for all those providing special needs support. Departmental meetings are minuted well and reflect good management and an awareness of future requirements. Action plans for the department are in place and as a consequence the department knows where it is going. Provision for those with special needs is sufficient for a majority of special educational needs students to make good progress. Provision itself is satisfactory, but if the deficiencies identified in this report, and noted in the recent LEA 2002 inspection, are rectified, provision can be good and students' progress even better.
86. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory, with some significant improvements in detail, but there needs to be a speedy resolution of those deficiencies noted in the last full inspection, the LEA report and this report, namely underdeveloped work with departments and the provision of differentiated work beyond that offered by setting. Additional training on the new Code of Practice and the use of differentiated work needs to be arranged as soon as possible. Some departments will only require regular monitoring, others may need extra small group training, which has already started with the assistance of the local education authority special educational needs inspector.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Number of lessons observed   | 133 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and students | 25  |

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

|            | Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|------------|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| Number     | 4         | 26        | 50   | 46           | 7              | 0    | 0         |
| Percentage | 3         | 20        | 38   | 35           | 5              | 0    | 0         |

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

### Information about the school's students

| Students on the school's roll   | Y7 – Y11 |
|---|----------|
| Number of students on the school's roll                                 | 601      |
| Number of full-time students known to be eligible for free school meals | 288      |

| Special educational needs   | Y7 – Y11 |
|---|----------|
| Number of students with statements of special educational needs       | 11       |
| Number of students on the school's special educational needs register | 149      |

| English as an additional language                         | No of students |
|---|----------------|
| Number of students with English as an additional language | 359            |

| Pupil mobility in the last school year   | No of students |
|--|----------------|
| Students who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 25             |
| Students who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving           | 34             |

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

|                           | %   |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data               | 7.7 |
| National comparative data | 8.1 |

#### Unauthorised absence

|                           | %   |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data               | 1.1 |
| National comparative data | 1.1 |

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

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

| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
|  | 2001 | 0    | 119   | 119   |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results       |          | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above   | Boys     | N/a     | N/a         | N/a     |
|   | Girls    | 62      | 58          | 58      |
|   | Total    | 62      | 58          | 58      |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above | School   | 52 (64) | 49 (42)     | 49 (34) |
|   | National | 64 (63) | 66 (65)     | 66 (59) |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above | School   | 19 (24) | 19 (18)     | 18 (10) |
|   | National | 31 (28) | 43 (42)     | 34 (30) |

| Teachers' Assessments                       |          | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above   | Boys     | N/a     | N/a         | N/a     |
|   | Girls    | 64      | 43          | 48      |
|   | Total    | 64      | 43          | 48      |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above | School   | 54 (54) | 36 (48)     | 40 (35) |
|   | National | 65 (64) | 68 (66)     | 64 (62) |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above | School   | 13 (22) | 10 (7)      | 8 (15)  |
|   | National | 31 (31) | 42 (39)     | 33 (29) |

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

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

| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
|  | 2001 | N/a  | 114   | 114   |

| GCSE results  |          | 5 or more grades A* to C | 5 or more grades A*-G | 1 or more grades A*-G |
|---|----------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified    | Boys     | 0                        | 0                     | 0                     |
|   | Girls    | 38                       | 87                    | 104                   |
|   | Total    | 38                       | 87                    | 104                   |
| Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified | School   | 33 (35)                  | 76 (91)               | 91 (100)              |
|   | National | 48 (47)                  | 91 (91)               | 96 (96)               |

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

| GCSE results                  |          | GCSE point score |
|-------------------------------|----------|------------------|
| Average point score per pupil | School   | 29.3             |
|                               | National | 39.0             |

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 pupils who achieved all those they studied | School   | 0      | N/a            |
|  | National |        | N/a            |

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

| Categories used in the Annual School Census         | No of pupils on roll | Number of fixed period exclusions | Number of permanent exclusions |
|---|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| White – British                                     | 136                  | 0                                 | 0                              |
| White – Irish                                       | 4                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| White – any other White background                  | 41                   | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Mixed – White and Black Caribbean                   | 15                   | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Mixed – White and Black African                     | 3                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Mixed – White and Asian                             | 2                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Mixed – any other mixed background                  | 0                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Asian or Asian British - Indian                     | 10                   | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Asian or Asian British - Pakistani                  | 51                   | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi                | 35                   | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background | 2                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Black or Black British – Caribbean                  | 39                   | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Black or Black British – African                    | 83                   | 3                                 | 0                              |
| Black or Black British – any other Black background | 36                   | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Chinese   | 3                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Any other ethnic group                              | 138                  | 1                                 | 0                              |
| No ethnic group recorded                            | 1                    | 0                                 | 0                              |

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



### Teachers and classes

#### Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 43 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher   | 14 |

#### Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

|   |      |
|---|------|
| Total number of education support staff | 23   |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week   | 42.5 |

#### Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes | 67% |
|---|-----|

#### Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

|             |    |
|-------------|----|
| Key Stage 3 | 24 |
| Key Stage 4 | 23 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

### Financial information

|                |           |
|----------------|-----------|
| Financial year | 2001-2002 |
|----------------|-----------|

|  | £         |
|--|-----------|
| Total income                               | 2,616,697 |
| Total expenditure                          | 2,549,474 |
| Expenditure per pupil                      | 4235      |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 148,777   |
| Balance carried forward to next year       | 216,000   |

### Recruitment of teachers

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years     | 22 |
| Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years | 16 |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)  | 4 |
| Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)                           | 0 |
| Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE) | 4 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

|                                   |     |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 600 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 74  |

### Percentage of responses in each category

|  | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school.   | 55             | 38            | 5                | 0                 | 1          |
| My child is making good progress in school.  | 48             | 42            | 5                | 1                 | 3          |
| Behaviour in the school is good.   | 46             | 36            | 4                | 7                 | 7          |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.                              | 44             | 38            | 10               | 6                 | 3          |
| The teaching is good.  | 43             | 32            | 9                | 3                 | 12         |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.                          | 42             | 37            | 8                | 5                 | 7          |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 56             | 28            | 10               | 3                 | 3          |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.              | 70             | 27            | 1                | 0                 | 1          |
| The school works closely with parents.   | 47             | 32            | 15               | 5                 | 1          |
| The school is well led and managed.  | 43             | 38            | 7                | 3                 | 9          |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.                      | 41             | 47            | 10               | 0                 | 3          |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.            | 36             | 46            | 8                | 3                 | 7          |

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

### ENGLISH

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

#### Strengths

- Students achieve well in relation to their prior attainment, and the rate of improvement is particularly strong among those for whom English is an additional language.
- Teaching is good, promoting effective learning.
- The head of department's leadership provides a clear sense of direction. Management of the department is effective and efficient.

#### Areas for improvement

- Detailed individual target setting will improve standards of attainment.
- The major features of the Key Stage 3 Literacy Strategy need secure incorporation into teaching methods.
- Raise standards of literacy by promoting a more intensive reading culture across the school.

87. Results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 in 2001 were below the national average, but above average compared with similar schools. The unconfirmed data for 2002 indicate that results were close to the 2001 national average, and well above when compared with similar schools. In the GCSE examinations in 2001, 47 per cent of students attained grades A\* - C in English, and 53 per cent in English Literature. The national averages for these are 56 and 61 per cent respectively. In 2002, 52 per cent of students attained grades A\* - C in English, and 59 per cent in English Literature - a clear year-on-year improvement. While attainment lower than the national average may be attributed to the high proportion of students for whom English is an additional language, for whom there has been a low starting point, there are good levels of achievement from year to year, as a result of good teaching and the high levels of motivation of the great majority.
88. The standards observed in the inspection remain below national averages throughout the school, although in Year 7 they are higher, and close to what might be expected of students of that age. The progress that students make remains good, for the reasons just given. Other features that impinge upon improvement are the additional extension classes provided, and the encouragement that many students receive from home.
89. The last inspection found weaknesses in the co-operation between the English department and the teachers of students with special educational needs and of those with English as an additional language. Liaison between the department and these two areas has now been improved, and indeed, a teacher from each has a regular class commitment within the department.
90. In the first of the three elements of English, speaking and listening, standards are below average in Years 7 to 9. Students listen carefully and frame what they wish to say thoughtfully. They listen to their teachers and to other students respectfully, but sometimes in their eagerness to respond, expression is inaccurate, and in many cases their grasp of conventional English is incomplete. This is not, however, to undervalue the standards of a small number of students, particularly in Year 7, whose speech is confident and fluent, following accepted patterns. In Years 10 and 11, faster learners speak well, and what they have to say is considered and structured. However average and below average attainers are hesitant using many "fillers" (e.g. "like", "you know" etc.), and struggling to say what they mean in a clearly understandable way.
91. Reading is also below average in general. In Year 7, about half the year group read with ease and expression, in line with the national average for their year group, but in Years 8 and 9, the understanding of the texts read in class is incomplete, and reading aloud is hesitant. The same is true for the majority in Years 10 and 11. While higher attainers show a mature understanding

of a text like "To Kill a Mockingbird", and can identify the key issues and the author's intentions, the majority do not find reading easy. For example, a student in a lower set was heard reading a poem of about 30 lines without understanding or expression, and with so much mispronunciation that its meaning was unintelligible.

92. In writing, expression is frequently simplistic and even among the highest attainers in Years 8 and 9 the word choice is often obvious, although technical aspects may be good. Students who write at the average or below average level for the school in Years 7 to 9 make good efforts to introduce liveliness and interest, but they are often handicapped by not understanding the formal requirements of written English: often there is little control, and language seems to spill out much as it is spoken. Year 7 is once more an exception, where average and above average standards are attained by half of the students, using a variety of sentence structures, drawing accurately from well-established word reserves. The problems of the use of excessively colloquial English continue in Years 10 and 11. In their approach to literary texts, students tend to narrate rather than to analyse. In continuous writing, language is handled competently by higher attainers, though without the flair or the technical accuracy to be expected at this level. Among the majority, expression is often clear and careful, but unsophisticated. Spelling is erratic ("tents" for "tense", "lever" for "leather", "cryed" for "cried"). Grammar mistakes are too frequent, especially concerning the use of verbs ("if they started a fight, they will be punished", "Yesterday, we visit their houses"). The same applies to punctuation: there are obvious mistakes such as the omission of full stops and confusion over capital letters. Presentation, however, is good throughout the school: all work is entitled and dated; handwriting is almost always joined and usually well formed.
93. Although standards may be below national averages, the picture is improving and results are getting better. Apart from Year 7, where attainment on entry into the school is higher than in other year groups, the majority of students start their secondary school lives from a low base. They build upon this progressively and their levels of achievement and the quality of their learning are good. Teachers' approaches are collaborative, and they engage and hold students' commitment. Their high expectations are implicit in their questioning techniques, which show clearly what is expected without giving easy answers, thus enhancing learning and driving progress. Students respond, eagerly, readily and analytically according to the quality of teachers' questions. In only one lesson during the inspection was unco-operative behaviour seen: this was where the lesson content was too difficult, and students (in Year 11) switched off rather than face what seemed to them obvious failure. Apart from this, attitudes are positive and behaviour is always satisfactory, and often good or very good. Students usually work hard and make good progress, and this is particularly true of those for whom English is an additional language. Students with special educational needs are well supported, and are enabled to make progress in line with their peers.
94. In the last inspection, teaching was found to be generally good and sometimes very good across the school. This remains broadly the case and has, if anything, improved. Only one unsatisfactory lesson was seen, and this was the result of an attempt to teach material inappropriate to the students' level of attainment. Generally, teachers have very good class control, and they plan very well, with the result that lessons are so well structured and paced that students have little time or inclination to go off task. Teachers have good subject knowledge, and they like and know their students well (even only a few days into a new school year), setting appropriate work for differing levels of attainment. Formal assessment of progress is regular, detailed and thorough in terms of tests. Marking is always carried out, and often teachers make written comments in students' work. These, however, are often bland and unhelpful (for example: "very good", or "lovely" in three successive pieces of work), and detailed, structured advice about how to improve is rare. Moreover, in no case was the subsequent work checked to see whether the advice had been followed. There is a clear need to promote higher standards through developmental marking, the sharing of evaluation, and the setting and frequent review of detailed targets.
95. The subject is well led and managed by a very experienced subject specialist. . There is a clear vision and perception of the priorities for the subject and the school. The departmental team are well integrated and committed to the improvement of standards, and there is good evidence of success. The written documentation is very detailed and gives clear guidance to

teachers, and the subject curriculum is well structured and comprehensive, although the full integration of the Key Stage 3 National Literacy Strategy is now overdue. The application of the three-part lesson (and particularly the shared objectives at the beginning and the shared evaluation in relation to those objectives at the end) is likely to be very influential in the further raising of standards. Resources for English in terms of classroom books are good, but there is now a need further to promote reading with the use of classroom libraries. Accommodation in some rooms is inadequate if classes of excessive size are crammed into them: in one lesson there was not enough space for all students to have access to a writing surface. Ventilation is poor, and likely to have a damaging effect upon learning in warm weather.

96. The provision for the provision of literacy throughout the school is satisfactory. In other departments, teachers seek to promote speaking and listening skills through role-play and class discussions. Key words are listed and their applications are emphasised. Many teachers have good blackboard or whiteboard skills, and the majority insist on good presentation of written work and on appropriate language in speech. The school library - a very large and pleasant space - is, however, insufficiently stocked and used. Students may visit it "for work or relaxation", as the teacher in charge put it, at breaks or lunchtime, and some students may work there after school. However, the number of books issued every week is low, and this suggests that a culture of literacy - of regular, frequent reading and the love of books - needs further development. This could be achieved by a more positive promotion of reading, for example through promotions of authors and themes, a regular author or 'book of the week'. The moment when a teacher hands a book to a student with a personal recommendation needs to be exploited and supported in English classrooms with good collections of appropriate books (including dual language texts), which students may borrow and take home to extend their reading and to enhance their pleasure in it.

## MATHEMATICS

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

### Strengths

- The attitudes and behaviour of the majority of the students in the school to mathematics.

### Areas for improvement

- Teaching and learning in order to raise the level of attainment.
- The implementation of a whole school strategy to develop numeracy across the curriculum.
- The use of ICT in mathematics teaching.

97. In national tests for Year 9 students in 2001, the standard reached by students in the school was well below national standards reached in all schools and it was below the results achieved in similar schools. Students' results in mathematics are below those in achieved in science and English. Over the last three years the average point score in national tests in Year 9 have been well below the national average point score although they have been rising broadly in line with the national trend.
98. The number of students in Year 11 who achieved grades A\* - C in GCSE results in 2001 was significantly below the national averages. There were no A\* grades awarded in 2001 to any pupil in Year 11 and students' performance in mathematics at GCSE A\* - C was below that of all other subjects. Between 1998 and 2001, results as measured by percentage of students achieving A\* to C were similar; however these results showed a significant increase in 2002. Results in GCSE, when compared using the average point score, are below those achieved in science and well below those achieved in English. There were a significant number of students who were not entered for the GCSE exam in mathematics; some of these students achieved the Certificate of Achievement in mathematics. The GCSE A\* - C results are in line with the results in schools whose Year 11 students gained the similar results to this school in their National Curriculum tests at the age of 14.

99. In lessons students are working below expectations in both key stages. Students are organised on the basis of prior achievement and the standards seen in the higher sets were in line with national expectation. In one Year 11 class more able students were able to explain frequency densities. In another class students with average ability were creating pie charts to represent data. Students in a higher ability set in Year 9 could apply Pythagoras' Theorem in a variety of situations and they could work out the sum of the interior angles in a polygon. Less able students in Year 9 are able to describe and name angles of different sizes.
100. The attainment of students in mathematics when they join the school has been rising but remains below the national averages for pupils aged 11. The majority of students in Year 7 have an appropriate understanding of place value. The more able students can work out the factors and multiples of numbers up to 100 and all but the least able can securely add numbers with two digits. By the time the students reach Year 8 the majority can solve simple equations with one unknown, more able students understand sequences and can work out the general term for a number in the sequence. More able students in Year 10 are able to explain the difference between continuous and discrete frequencies and give examples. The progress of all but the more able students in Years 9, 10 and 11 is affected by their insecure numerical skills.
101. Throughout the school the progress students make in mathematics is enhanced by the good behaviour and very good attitudes students show in throughout their lessons. However, progress, particularly for the younger students, is hindered by the way mathematics is timetabled. Most mathematics lessons last ninety minutes and in several lessons pupils' interest and enthusiasm was waning towards the end.
102. When students are given the opportunity to discuss a problem they do so with enthusiasm. For example in a Year 8 class the students joined in a lively class debate about how to solve an equation with one unknown but which was slightly different to ones they had worked on earlier. Given the opportunity students will help one another, and they are not afraid to seek help from the teacher when necessary. In class students work diligently and this allows the teacher to give focused support to individuals and small groups.
103. Students with special educational needs, particularly those in the lowest sets make good progress. Teachers of these groups plan the learning in small but appropriate steps to ensure progress is made. When appropriate teachers use materials specially developed as part of the National Numeracy Strategy to support learning of these students. Most learning support assistants work effectively in the classroom; they provide focused learning support and keep ongoing records of progress. Teachers are aware of those students in their class for whom English is their second language, and some teachers adapt the whole class teaching to ensure access to the learning. In one class the teacher was emphasising the key words by checking all the students' understanding and presenting the words both orally and in written form.
104. The use of ICT within mathematics needs further development. The developing schemes of work include references to the use of ICT but difficulties of access and compatibility have delayed progress.
105. The mathematics department has embraced elements of the National Numeracy Strategy. Plans to develop number skills within the classroom are in place and being developed and most lessons begin with a short mental test. However, the existing numeracy policy does not ensure that students' numerical skills and understanding are progressively developed in a consistent and coherent way across the school. In science the use of numerical skills is not extensive; however when required, the students have appropriate skills. For example in science, students in Key Stage 3 show good graphical skills and students in Key Stage 4 can substitute numbers into formulae correctly. On the other hand in design technology students' numerical work lacks accuracy, opportunities to develop numerical skills in this subject are not developed.
106. Teaching in mathematics is satisfactory overall and some of the teaching is good or better. In one excellent lesson the teacher had clear objectives for learning which were used effectively to drive the learning forward, by creating a learning contract with the students based on these

objectives. There were high expectations both of learning and behaviour and progress was celebrated and rewarded. The teacher had knowledge of the students' abilities and needs and had planned for the range ability with additional materials and alternative approaches.

107. Teachers have good subject knowledge. In good lessons questioning was used to explore and develop learning and the students were well managed. However in other lessons there was a lack of pace which was often linked to lack of differentiation. Teachers tended to teach to the perceived middle ability within the class; consequently the more able in the group were not always sufficiently challenged. The impact on progress of the lack of differentiation was magnified by the fact that at the time of the inspection some of the students were not in sets that coincided with their ability. The range of teaching strategies used was limited and since the lessons last ninety minutes this impacts on the students' ability to sustain interest throughout. Teachers do not consistently use lesson objectives to focus the learning during the lesson and consequently the plenary was not as effective as it might have been to summarise learning.
108. The procedures for assessing students' attainment and progress are in place. However as yet these procedures are not making a significant impact on curriculum planning. Marking is variable and the amount of written feedback inconsistent. Students are regularly assessed and these assessments are monitored to assess the progress of individual students and groups of students. Students are given regular subject related generic targets through the academic tutoring process. However the targets do not sufficiently link to learning objectives and therefore students do not have a clear awareness of what they need to do in order to improve their performance. The department has some strategies for meeting the attainment targets for the current Year 11 and Year 9, including booster classes, teaching split classes and careful deployment of staff.
109. The department has a new department leader. There is an appropriate departmental development plan and schemes of work are being developed. Teaching and learning in the department are being monitored. The local education authority has provided good support to the department during a period of change and turbulence. The recruitment of mathematics teachers has been very difficult in recent years; for example one Year 10 group could not remember exactly how many mathematics teachers had taught them during Year 9. The lack of stability in the department has affected standards.
110. There are no teachers currently teaching at the school who were teaching in the school during the last inspection. However progress since that inspection has been satisfactory. Attainment is improving and there is now satisfactory progress in both key stages. There is a focus on numeracy within the department and the developing scheme of work is providing a framework for teaching and progression. Teaching is satisfactory or better although pace, differentiation and interactive methods remain issues within some of the teaching. The subject leader has made a good start and the management of the department has improved. There are appropriate targets for the development of the department.

## SCIENCE

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

### Strengths

- Improving results for students aged 14.
- Relationships between students and between students and teachers.
- Good laboratories, technical support and ICT resources.
- Schemes of work for all years.

#### Areas for improvement

- Use of assessment data to target teaching more closely to student needs and to monitor progress.
- Increased opportunity for independent learning.
- Increased emphasis on developing students' understanding and application of concepts in addition to their factual recall.
- Marking and reports.

111. Progress from age 11 to 14 is satisfactory. The attainment of students on entry to the school is well below that found nationally in science. By the age of 14 the attainment of students remains well below that found nationally for girls. Within the school attainment in science is below that in English but above that in mathematics. Attainment is well above that found in similar schools. Students aged 11 knew about particle theory but were not clearly able to relate this to expansion, melting and diffusion. They understood the structure of the human reproductive system. Older students showed an understanding of the circulatory system and an able pupil recalled the function of mitochondria from a recent homework. Students aged 14 were able to recall the effect of lenses and ray diagrams but their understanding of the parts of the eye and their interaction was less clear. Where students had carried out practical work, observations had been made but students were less skilled in identifying patterns in data and in using their knowledge of science to explain their results.
112. Progress to age 16 is satisfactory overall. Attainment by the age of 16 is below national attainment for girls. Whilst able girls attain good results, students of average ability achieve less well. A small number of students gain Certificate of Achievement awards although a number gained no award in 2001. The proportion of students gaining an award increased in 2002 but overall attainment decreased. Students aged 15 knew the terms brain and spinal cord but showed insecure understanding of the nervous system, being unable to explain the term neurone and how components linked together in the nervous system. More able students could explain the reflex arc. The most able students showed good understanding of kidney function and its control by hormones. A pupil with special educational needs knew that the terms '*oesophagus*' and '*gullet*' were interchangeable. Students age 16 could recall the term acid, alkali, neutralisation and the pH scale. More able students were able to balance equations and knew the terms ionic and covalent compounds but they were not able to clearly explain the formation of ions and how ions bond together. During work on energy in reactions, students could not readily suggest why the temperature of the reaction increased.
113. Students typically showed a satisfactory grasp of scientific terms but insecurity in understanding principles, explaining observations using scientific knowledge and using reasoning to predict or attempt to understand why things happen. Students had sufficient grasp of mathematical skills for them to carry out their work. Students used tally charts, bar charts and scatter graphs to display results, some using ICT to do this. Students aged 14 were able to substitute values in formulae to obtain results.
114. For students aged 14 all teaching was satisfactory or better with the majority of lessons being good. Lessons were well planned and based on the schemes of work. The influence of the Key Stage 3 strategies was evident in lessons. Lessons had 3 parts, a start activity, a main learning activity and a plenary. Where teaching showed strengths, learning objectives were identified and students with special educational or linguistic needs were noted. In a lesson about circulation, a starter activity forming sentences from appropriate key words refreshed students' memories and set the scene for the lesson. The teacher, to probe students' understanding of terms, used the sentences that the students had constructed and extended their learning by direct questions. Effective pupil and classroom management was seen where students were moved to observe a demonstration dissection and blinds were sensibly adjusted so that all could see well. At the end of lessons plenary activities reviewed what had been learned and learning objectives were checked. Pace of teaching was appropriate, the lessons ended on time and the students were dismissed in an orderly fashion. In a lesson about disease resistance, a well-structured group activity was planned involving an Internet search designed to help develop initiative. Discussion and feedback enabled students to work with ideas and develop presentation skills.



115. Where teaching showed need for improvement, the start activities were not well targeted. In a lesson about human reproduction, students completed the work quickly since many had studied the work before, indicating a need for greater knowledge of where students were in their learning and a need to provide suitably challenging materials. In a lesson where good use had been made of pupil discussion about factors affecting variation in humans there was a need for more effective consolidation of ideas to ensure students left with clear views of what they had learned. In a lesson about eye structure, laptop computers were available to students but the resource was not well used and examination questions were not well integrated into the work. Whilst content was at a high standard, the logical progression and development of ideas did not flow well, making learning more difficult for students.
116. For students from 14 to 16, the majority of teaching was satisfactory with a number of good lessons. Lessons typically showed start, central and plenary activities. Where teaching showed strengths as in a lesson about health, the lesson plan was well structured and progression of ideas was logical, a range of teaching strategies based on literacy skills was used, such as reading aloud, silent reading, comprehension, clarification of terms and use of oral questions to aid learning. In a lesson about motion, learning was made enjoyable by encouraging students to construct distance/time graphs on the whiteboard in front of the class. Students were then helped to read information from graphs and the data used to calculate speed. Data were used to enable students to consolidate their learning by constructing graphs - manually or by the use of laptop computers - for interpretation. Language and special need support teachers were well used. Where teaching showed need for improvement, as in a lesson about the nervous system, very good quality video material was used but there was insufficient targeted activity based on this to encourage students to learn more effectively from what was seen. In other lessons, the visual impact of presentation materials was poor – in some cases due to poor condition of blackboard surfaces, the use of overhead transparency materials that were too small or worksheet quality. Whilst teachers asked questions of students the tendency was to stress factual recall. There is a need to extend the style of questioning to probe students' understanding and to encourage them to think more about applications of concepts, critical analysis of data and the science behind observations.
117. Practical work was evident but there should be a better balance between practical and theoretical work. A strategy for the teaching of science investigations from age 11 to 16 would help learning in this area. The relationships between students and teachers are good. Students apply themselves well to their learning and maintain concentration for extended periods of time.
118. Management of the science department is satisfactory. Schemes of work are in place for all years and the Key Stage 3 strategies for science are being implemented. The policy for deciding entry levels for students in Year 11 should be reviewed. Laboratory and ICT resources are good. New textbooks are available but there is a need for a greater quantity to allow more students to have books to take home. Teaching and marking have been monitored; however there is a need to use the findings to improve standards in these areas. Marking does not provide sufficient feedback to students on how to improve their learning in science. The information provided by reports includes target and current attainment levels but does not give a clear picture of what science students have studied or where their strengths or weaknesses lie. The department is building a database of student performance but as yet this is not being used effectively to target pupil learning through appropriately differentiated materials or to determine the value added to students' performance. The structure of the timetable and grouping of students leads to a tendency for slippage in the use of time and confusion in the minds of students of GCSE age who may concurrently have three topics and the work of two teachers in one exercise book. The organisation of resources and equipment by the technicians is very good but there has been no technical in-service training for many years. The department has considered approaches to literacy and this is currently satisfactory but a more consistent approach would strengthen this area. As yet approaches to numeracy are not well formulated; however students were effectively able to accomplish all the mathematical tasks asked of them.

119. Since the last inspection progress has been satisfactory. The action plan has been addressed, schemes of work are in place, standards have improved and ICT provision is better but its consistent effective use needs to be developed. Pupil progress is satisfactory – with the more able students achieving well. Students still need to write precise explanations and evaluate evidence and still need the opportunity to become independent thinkers. The use of searching questions during teaching is not a strength typically observed. The approach to the marking of students' work should be reviewed. Planning with teachers of special educational needs and of English as an additional language has improved. These students make good progress. Teaching has been monitored but there needs to be a more pro-active approach in identifying strengths, areas for development and in sharing good practice.

## ART AND DESIGN

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

### Strengths

- Good standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
- The students make good progress.
- Overall, teaching is good and some teaching is excellent.
- Students show high levels of interest and are well motivated.
- Students follow a broad curriculum that includes the development of fine art, design and craft skills.

### Areas for improvement

- The use of marking to assist students in self-evaluation.
- Establishing structured beginnings and endings of lessons.
- The encouragement of reflection and critical discussion.
- The ongoing development of ICT in art.

120. Attainment across the school in art and design is satisfactory and at Key Stage 4, it is good. A number of students in Year 7 start with below average attainment; for example, where ideas, drawing and observation skills are undeveloped. However, standards of achievement increase and by the end of Key Stage 3 they compare favourably with national expectations. This improvement continues through Key Stage 4. Consequently, although GCSE results are below national expectations for A\* to C grades, all students taking art are awarded A\* to G grades. Standards are also improved because there are good opportunities to extend the school day. One pupil achieved a GCSE 'B' grade by working after school. Although recent exam results have been disappointing, they show improvement this year and art has a high profile. In June 2001 the school gained a silver Arts Mark. Increasing numbers of students opt to take this subject and currently there are three groups in Year 11 following the GCSE course.
121. All students make good progress. There are many students who have special educational needs but all students taking art GCSE consistently achieve a grade between A\* and G. Care is taken to ensure that those who have special educational needs follow the same curriculum and make good progress. Those with English as an additional language are included well. Daily planning addresses any difficulties immediately. Students are taught in sets and differentiation happens less by input than by expected outcomes. Because all lessons follow the same theme, different standards of work show how students achieve at different levels. For example, within one year portraits can range from immature representations to bold, competent compositions.
122. The good standards reported in the last inspection have been maintained. The content of the art curriculum displays a balance between learning about western and eastern art, both in history and the present day. Some very impressive work illustrates how students from Year 7 to Year 11 create images of famous and infamous women from ancient Greece. This project includes characterisation, photography, creative adaptation of computer images and painting.

Expectations are high and students also experience a broad art curriculum. Colourful silk painting and batik work show the development of craft skills. Ceramic dishes and terracotta ocarinas are skilfully realised and functional.

123. Teaching across the department is good and some excellent teaching was observed. Good planning and organisation enabled a supply teacher to offer continuity very successfully during the inspection. Students are taught a relevant art vocabulary such as 'tessellate,' 'Tantra' and 'contrast' as an important part of lessons. The development of literacy skills is central to planning and lesson objectives. Although some students in lower sets have difficulty with more complex concepts, they are encouraged to complete intricate patterns and learn by experience. Homework is integral to what is learned and students are expected to do independent research using the Internet and the school and local library. In lessons a few introductions can be overlong and endings are less well organised. However, where for example, a wealth of objects, display, images and music enhances teaching about Hindu and Islamic art, students show genuine dismay when the lesson ends. Expected behaviour is clearly defined and all are encouraged to engage with the subject. Some low level chattering and disruption increases as lessons progress but much of this is curiosity about the subject. Students are generally well motivated and enthusiastic. Comprehensive ongoing assessment against attainment levels and in daily planning ensures progression. Its use to inform students is less efficient. Monitoring and evaluation, though securely in place, are not well communicated to students. Marking is uninformative and the involvement of the students in a positive appreciation and criticism of their work is not yet established. Art and design is a popular subject across the school. Careful insistence on completion of work ensures the majority stay on task, most students listen carefully and generate ideas. When designing a 'Bollywood' poster some have difficulty reproducing their intentions to the standard they want but others combine images to create original and attractive work.
124. Teaching also takes good account of the spiritual element in art. Customs and beliefs illustrated by architecture and sculpture are discussed with interest and curiosity. Exceptional work is exhibited to demonstrate what can be achieved. Some colourful and well-realised portraits of staff show a high standard of artwork. Gifted and talented students often choose to stay after school and have also attended a very successful summer school. Very good use is made of outstanding work, which is collated and circulated to staff as a resource in other subjects. Great attention is paid to the richness of different cultures and artwork enhances the school environment. Colourful pictures of South American patterns and figures in oil pastels welcome visitors outside the library. Students working with a local charity to improve a park and recycle waste establish practical links with the local community. Additionally a number of drawings from a local primary school are displayed in a communal area. Gustav Klimt's 'The Kiss' is copied in order to examine patterns and textures.
125. The use of ICT is increasing slowly. There have been teething problems with the departmental aim to raise the level of competence in ICT and art. This work is ongoing and continues to require a high level of input and resources. Liaison with the school library is proving very effective and access to websites and the Internet is developing well. The library is moderately well resourced with reference books for art and they are used regularly by students for their own research work.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

### Strengths

- The attainment of students in the examinations of textiles and resistant materials at GCSE in 2002.
- Students' enthusiasm for the subject.

#### Areas for improvement

- To improve the overall standard of teaching.
- Ensure curriculum provision meets all statutory requirements.
- Developing improved systems for the accurate assessment of students' achievements.
- Provision of resources for teaching and learning and, in particular, suitable quantities of equipment for pupil use in graphical and practical areas.
- Further development of information and communication technology facilities to improve designing and making processes for students.
- Improving the facilities for food technology practical work so that they meet national and local Health and Safety regulations.
- The room accommodation.

126. Students in 2002 performed less well at the end of Year 9 than the national average. Approximately 60 per cent achieved the expected level but a significant number achieved a level much below that. Evidence from the inspection shows that students are working beneath the level achieved last year. Students coming into the school at the age of eleven have below average design and technology skills and the insecure teaching of basic subject-specific skills in Years 7 to 9 is hindering their progress. This is particularly true of design process and development work.
127. The GCSE examination results of 2002 show significant variations between courses. The girls who opted to take resistant materials did very well and achieved grades between A\* and C that were well above the national average. This clearly represents high achievement. Girls who took textiles also achieved grades that were significantly above the national average. However, the students who opted to study food technology did quite poorly, with very few achieving a grade between A\* and C. The high overall levels of attainment of the last academic year were not evident during the inspection, apart from some aspects in textiles.
128. One major area of weakness is that there are not common approaches or consistent expectations within the department to developing the design processes. Nor are there common expectations as to how students should develop their designs by drawing or using models. This means that different teachers have their own methods and expectations and changes of staff mean that a different set of expectations and approaches has to be learnt. Changes in staffing now mean that those teachers who achieved such good results for their students in resistant materials last year no longer work in the department and the indications are that grades will not be as high this year. Other than for one group of older students in textiles, the department did not provide any examples of work for evaluation of past or present students. This restricted profoundly the opportunities for a full evaluation of current work completed in the department.
129. Teaching is variable in quality in Years 7 to 9. At this stage, half of the teaching is satisfactory or good and half is unsatisfactory. In Years 10 and 11 the situation improves and the teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good although it was not possible to see many lessons. In one Year 9 textiles lesson where the lesson was judged to be good, the teacher induced good lesson pace with interesting and stimulating content. The attitude of the girls towards the work was positive and a challenge for accurate completion was thrown to all of them. By comparison, in another Year 9 upper-ability group where students were 're-designing' a room, the teacher failed to motivate the students and they were not engaged in the work; poor concentration punctuated the lesson. Towards its end there were few students still working and the lesson was judged unsatisfactory; the overall standard of behaviour was poor. Students with special educational needs are not provided for equitably. Members of the support staff are only used with some teachers and special educational needs provision for the subject is only satisfactory or better when these staff is used.
130. Students display variable attitudes towards their learning. It was at its best when they made their own decisions about their designs and the techniques they wish to employ. Students were responsive when they were given the opportunities to use a wider range of tools and equipment. This was seen in textiles, where students in Year 9 had good individual support from their teacher and they responded by developing their own ideas independently and

effectively. There was, however, an absence of ICT used for the development of design and technological capability in all but one lesson. The exception was in the use of laptop computers used for data searching on a local intra-net; this was effective.

131. Students do not have a clear idea of how well they are doing in the subject or what they have to do next in order to improve, for example to gain a higher level in the National Curriculum or to improve their examination work because the methods of assessment used within the department are, in the main, ineffective. It is clear that some teachers do establish good relationships with their students. Students in return respond in an appropriate, polite and courteous manner as well as becoming more actively involved in the lesson.
132. The rooms that are used for teaching design and technology are now barely suitable for their intended tasks. Food technology and other aspects of the subject are taught in the same rooms, giving rise to a health and safety issue where food preparation is concerned. There is no specific design graphics studio or clean area where students can complete high quality graphical work for the course on which they are engaged. The same may be said of work requiring the use of systems, control and electronics. Teaching and learning materials and equipment are variable in quality and availability. The range of textbooks for student use is of good quality. There is a distinct shortage of hand tools readily available for pupil use in resistant materials.
133. Some changes in management have been made recently and the department is trying to develop a vision for the future. The recently written departmental handbook needs better implementation and further refinement. There is significant inconsistency in the way members of the department are working and greater coherence is required. Significant areas of the National Curriculum are not being taught, such as systems and control at years seven to nine, and knowledge and understanding of structures in the same age range. As the leadership and management do not secure appropriate provision for the students in all years of the school and in view of the various fundamental shortcomings described above, the department is judged to be unsatisfactory overall.

## DRAMA

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

### Strengths

- The quality of teaching, relationships with students and expectation set by teachers in terms of work, attitude and behaviour.
- Standards achieved by students.
- Thorough and detailed management of the subject providing direction and focus for all the work.
- Enthusiasm and interest of students who want to achieve and are excited by the creative process.

### Areas for improvement

- The opportunity to link more closely the assessment, target setting and curriculum planning.

134. Attainment in drama is above average in both Key Stage 3 and 4. GCSE results in recent years have been well above national averages for the higher A\*-C grades and in 2002 were above those achieved by students in many other subjects in the school. In relation to their abilities, students' achievement and progress is good or very good throughout the subject. There are no particular differences in the achievement or progress of students identified by ethnicity or ability including those students with special educational needs or with language needs.
135. At Key Stage 3, students respond positively to the disciplines and challenges of the subject. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour, attitudes and attention to the quality of the work produced which encourages students to focus on tasks, consider development of ideas, review and refine their work to meet those expectations. They produce work of good quality with often innovative or creative solutions to problems. For example, in improvisation work on '*Darkwood Manor*', Year 8 students were required to create and use sound effects to enhance the storyline

and create audience suspense. By Year 9, students apply a range of dramatic skills and techniques confidently. Planning skills are very well developed with good co-operation in group work. Students listen carefully to each other's ideas, views and opinions and then select, reject, adapt and refine their work to improve quality. Students are encouraged to develop their ideas independently of the teacher and are expected to research topics to broaden the base of information and understanding before developing performance pieces. Students have a responsibility for their work and they react with care and attention to detail.

136. At Key Stage 4, those students electing to take the subject on to examination level achieve above and well above expectations. Their work reflects the breadth and depth of subject knowledge gained at Key Stage 3. They adopt a variety of different approaches in their planning, and understanding is clear as students talk confidently and articulately about what they know, explaining the rationale for development and ideas for the next stages. Written work is produced well with appropriate use of technical terminology and some very good evaluation of work in hand or seen outside the curriculum.
137. Recent changes include the expansion of the drama department to include a second teacher, working with students in Key Stage 3. This provides wider opportunities for development of the subject and in the monitoring of the progress of students. The introduction of the levels for drama, devised by the department, helps to identify standards achieved and progress made and usefully inform the targets set for students and how they might improve. There is room, however, for even greater precision to identify students' strengths and weaknesses. This should prove useful in monitoring the progress of students with special educational needs, those with particular language difficulties and those who arrive late to the school or stay for limited periods.
138. Good or very good teaching contributes towards the standards achieved. Teachers' expectations are very high, their discipline is consistent and students know what is expected of them and they respond positively. They arrive promptly, ready to work and sustain high levels of concentration and effort throughout lessons. Teachers provide good opportunities for group work, which allows for good use of time, the flexibility for students to develop different responses to tasks and time for help and support to be targeted to best effect. Very good questioning based on detailed subject knowledge explores students' understanding and is used as an effective tool to encourage students to think about their work and in developing their oral skills and use of technical vocabulary. Good relationships among students and between students and teachers encourage open and honest discussion. When students evaluate each other's work, students know their views are valued and they are confident in sharing their opinions with others. Lessons are prepared thoroughly and objectives are shared with students. Tasks and modules are linked to ensure skill development, and lesson time is used effectively for all three phases of drama; devising ideas and planning, performing and evaluating or reviewing the work.
139. Teachers use resources effectively to promote learning and to stimulate creativity. Although the department has a wide range of resources, not all are in good repair. It would benefit the subject if repairs to lighting and blackout facilities could be completed. Good resources have been developed for improving language and vocabulary and are referred to effectively in lessons; students are expected to be able to use technical vocabulary appropriately. Good use is made of outside agencies to provide further opportunities for study or to experience other productions.

## GEOGRAPHY

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

### Strengths

- Leadership and management, which have brought about an excellent improvement in standards.
- Strong support for students leading to good progress by all groups of students.
- Marking and assessment that are helpful to students.

Areas for improvement

- The quality of the accommodation is poor and the display space is not used well.

140. Standards are below average on entry to the school but students make good progress during Key Stage 3 so that by the end of Year 9 attainment is broadly in line with national expectations. In Year 7 students develop secure map skills and use a variety of mapping techniques, for example in a study which showed good understanding of inner city decline. Year 8 students handle concepts such as regional differences in Brazil and sustainability very well. Students of all abilities take a pride in their work. They are able to recall previous work very well so that during discussion one girl in Year 9 was able to draw parallels between the location of rich and poor in Johannesburg, where she knew that the world leaders met, with Rio de Janeiro, which she had studied in Year 8.
141. Students make good progress in Key 4 and standards are now in line with national expectations. In the last three years the number of students attaining grades A\*-C at GCSE has been above or in line with national averages. All students who took the examination gained at least grade G; this proportion is also above average. Students' attainment in geography is on average higher than in their other subjects. There is some variation from year to year according to the overall ability of the students who choose to study geography, which depends on the school's option system. Results in 2001 were outstanding. Evidence from the inspection indicates that current Year 11 students are on the whole achieving below national expectations whereas standards in Year 10 are well above; this was well illustrated by differences in their knowledge of places that have been studied. In one Year 10 class maps relating to climate were also used well to work out types of climate and patterns of distribution in the world. Students in Year 11 have good critical skills when interpreting tables of data. For example, one girl picked up the apparent anomaly of Malaysia's death rate being half of the United Kingdom's and lower attaining students were able to use the data to explain the differences in population pyramid graphs which they had constructed accurately.
142. In both key stages students with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs are very well supported and are making good progress. Higher attaining students are also suitably challenged and achieve well. There are excellent relationships in the classroom between students and between students and their teacher. Students' attitudes and behaviour are very good.
143. There has been a marked improvement in standards since the last inspection. There has been a steady increase in attainment throughout the ability range at the end of Key Stage 3 and there was a rapid and sustained improvement in GCSE results in the two years following the inspection. Geography is now a popular choice in Key Stage 4. Students clearly enjoy the subject: they take a lively part in lessons and are keen to volunteer answers and to read aloud. One girl in Year 10 said 'Geography has been fun since Year 7'.
144. The quality of teaching is good. This can be seen from the work that students did during the last school year and by lessons observed during the inspection. All lessons were at least satisfactory and most were good; teaching was excellent in one lesson in which a class of mainly lower attaining students, for many of whom English was an additional language, learnt how to construct climate graphs. The aims of the lessons are made clear at the start, learning is reviewed at the end and it is recapped as a link to the start of the next lesson so that students are clear about what they are learning. Teachers plan thoroughly to take account of the length of the lessons and guide students through in stages so that they achieve well, although this sometimes leads to lessons being teacher-dominated so that students are not given sufficient time or scope for using their own initiative. However, teachers pay attention to maintaining interest by drawing on students' own experiences, by making comparisons with the teacher's home country or by references to contemporary events. For example, a homework, which asked students to research a recent earthquake, had been set to a Year 8 class and during the inspection a girl handed in a very good report, produced using ICT, which described the event and explained it in terms of plate tectonics. Teachers know their students' needs and work well with learning support assistants; there is a very productive relationship with the additional needs departments, which have prepared coursework aids for lower attaining students and for those pupils with English as an additional language. Assessment procedures

and monitoring students' progress are strengths of the department. Regular and thorough marking of work shows students how to improve and they are aware of the progress they are making and of their targets. Assignments at the end of each unit provide differentiated activities so that all students can demonstrate their understanding.

145. The department has very thorough schemes of work. Fieldwork is planned for each year up to Year 11 and an exercise using ICT is planned for each half term. One Year 9 project is assessed for attainment in geography and ICT; for example, finding crime rates in London and comparing them with local people's perceptions of crime. The residential field course in Kent allows students to compare pollution levels in the River Stour with the Thames at Chiswick as part of their GCSE coursework. The department is committed to the school's policies for numeracy, literacy and citizenship, which are identified in the schemes of work, and makes a good contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. The lessons observed showed particularly good strategies aimed at raising standards of literacy. Resources are good and are managed well. However, there has often been an over-reliance on textbook exercises as a basis for students' work in their exercise books. Accommodation is unsatisfactory. The rooms provide limited scope for re-arranging tables to facilitate group work. In particular, one room has serious damp problems and a blackboard and screen that were not functioning at the time of the inspection. These problems are due to be addressed but thought needs to be given to providing an attractive environment in the geography areas, including up-to-date display material and students' work. Some aspects of the school's timetable have a negative effect on learning, particularly the frequency and length of lessons; students found it hard to keep up their level of concentration in the last quarter of an hour.
146. The subject has benefited from excellent leadership with a clear vision of aims, and from rigorous management. This has brought about an excellent improvement since the last inspection when raising standards of attainment was a key issue for the school; all areas of weakness have been addressed through very effective action planning. Both of the geography teachers left the school in July 2002 and the school has been unable to attract a new head of department. A supply teacher is temporarily filling this vacancy but the excellent organisation of the subject has ensured a smooth hand-over to the two new teachers, who are working together very well to maintain the high standards.

## HISTORY

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

### Strengths

- Overall quality of teaching.
- Rigour of assessment methods.
- Provision for most and least able students.
- Development of strategies for improving literacy, and for students with English as an additional language.

### Areas for improvement

- Percentage of students gaining GCSE Grades C and above.
- Degree of challenge in provision for students of average ability.

147. Results achieved through teacher assessment at KS3 are below national averages, with 45 per cent gaining level 5 or above in 2001 against 63 per cent nationally. Figures for 2002 were similar. GCSE results are also below national average. The trend in A\*-C passes 1999-2002 is downward, whilst the school trend is upward. In the same examination, 89 per cent of students achieved Grades A-G, confirming a rising trend 1999-2001. In 2002, the A\*-C score dropped to 41.7 per cent, whilst the A\*-G score rose to 100 per cent. It is worth noting that despite the downward trend in A\*-C scores, A\*-A grades have remained relatively high and that out of 26 students scoring A\*-D in 2002, 11 achieved Grade D. One reason for lower than average



GCSE results is the size of entry, which is consistently high in comparison with, for example, geography. This produces a wider range of ability amongst those opting for history, attributable in turn to improving performance at Key Stage 3.

148. In Key Stage 3, standards achieved in work seen during the inspection are closer to national norms than 2001 results suggest. Students in Y7 have a sound understanding of the nature of historical evidence and of what it can or cannot tell us. They can make perceptive inferences from historical sources and artefacts and understand some of the ways in which these can be used as evidence about the past. Year 8 students can make inferences about Tudor propaganda from portraits of ruling monarchs, but the quality of the inferences made – and links between them - are hampered by lack of appropriate contextual knowledge. By the end of Year 9, students can use sources of evidence to reconstruct the feelings and attitudes of 18<sup>th</sup> century slaves and their owners. Some students in a lower set working on the same topic can express their understanding orally –“These people are not even afraid of God”. They can also offer reasons for selecting or rejecting information for their ‘diaries’ based on understanding of the limits of what the ‘subject’ could have known at the time. However, less able students in Year 9 generally find it difficult to achieve a sense of period, basing their responses on common sense reasoning and/or anachronism.
149. Standards observed in the work of students in Key Stage 4 are in line with national norms. Students in Year 10 can make sophisticated inferences from visual sources, for example about the kind of life enjoyed by the imperial family in pre-revolutionary China from the length of the Empress’s finger nails! Able students in Year 10 can distinguish between the long, medium and short-term causes of the Chinese Revolution of 1911 and understand what each type of causal factor can and cannot explain. However, only the ablest, when questioned, were able to propose a method for determining the relative importance of different causal factors. In Year 11, students in the lower set can interrogate and draw inferences from Nazi propaganda posters covering the period 1933-39 and can use this as evidence for well structured accounts of change in official Nazi attitudes towards women over this period. The tendency persists, particularly amongst less able students in Key Stage 4, to treat written sources uncritically as ‘face value’ information, rather than as evidence to be interpreted or evaluated for reliability or usefulness.
150. The quality of teaching is good overall and on occasion very good. Teaching is well planned and well informed, in terms of both subject knowledge and historical understanding and experienced specialists make very good use of a variety of questioning techniques. In the best practice – observed in a lesson introducing Year 7 students to the nature and uses of historical sources – a sequence of inventive and challenging activities revealed a clear progression in students’ learning. Considerable attention has been given to meeting the needs of the least and most able students but less so those of students of middling ability and this is reflected in GCSE results. A notable feature of the work of the department is the way in which it strives to resolve issues associated with the ethnic diversity of the pupil population of the school. This has involved close liaison with the teachers of English as an additional language to develop appropriate literacy strategies, and changes to curriculum content to provide topics dealing with Black and Islamic History.
151. Two factors in particular contribute to the success of teaching and learning in the history department, and so to the raising of standards. The first of these is the effectiveness of departmental management. Systems and responsibilities are well known, so that there is a co-ordinated, collaborative approach to both the planning and organisation of teaching and learning. Financial management is sound and the department is well resourced, making full use of opportunities provided by various sources of external funding. The department looks closely and critically at its own practice and constantly strives for improvement. This is reflected in the second contributory factor - the scheme of assessment for Key Stage 3. A number of classroom activities, covering an appropriate range of knowledge and understanding are identified as assessment tasks and accompanied by task-specific mark schemes. Marking is detailed, diagnostic and developmental, so providing a reliable basis for recording pupil attainment, setting targets and monitoring pupil progress. In addition, the department keeps an extensive, annotated portfolio of students’ work, which is updated on a regular basis.

152. Since the last inspection, the department has made considerable progress in the use of ICT, again supported by a portfolio of ICT-related tasks and examples of students' work. Similar progress has been made in the development of strategies to improve levels of literacy across both key stages. However, the provision for, and attainment of 'middle set' students remains a matter for concern.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

### Strengths

- Standards are improving over time.
- A substantial investment in hardware has been made, and the ICT resources have improved since the last inspection.
- All teachers have access to a laptop for curricular planning.
- Laptops that are used throughout the school are an excellent resource.
- Nearly all teachers have completed their computer training.
- There is a good culture of ICT use by students and teachers.

### Areas for improvement

- The strategic role of the ICT co-ordinator should be reviewed.
- Monitoring of ICT within subjects should be reviewed to enable the ICT coordinator to have an input.
- The assessment and moderation process for ICT, particularly the way in which end of Year 9 attainment is determined, should be reviewed and made more rigorous.

153. Since the last inspection the school has made progress in a number of areas in ICT. The standards achieved by students have steadily improved and there has been a major investment in equipment, both for students and staff. The equipment is now standardised, and in conjunction with the ICT training teachers have completed, has enabled the school to develop a culture in which ICT is used with ease and confidence. This is a positive development that needs to be followed through so that other aspects of the subject move forward.
154. Standards at the end of Year 9 are in line with national averages, however teachers' assessments undertaken at the end of Year 9 in 2002 indicate that standards were above national expectations. The assessments were generous; standards have improved over time but the evidence seen during the inspection, the scrutiny of work provided by the school and observation of lessons show that attainment is in line with, and not above, national expectations. In Years 7 the students have a lesson each week, in which common skills are taught. In Years 8 and 9 ICT is taught through other subjects, with the head of department being responsible for monitoring its delivery and assessment. To ensure that all students receive their ICT entitlement this process must be rigorous and departments must teach their aspect of ICT. This has not been the case because a number of departments have not taught their section of the work. Students are confident users of the Internet for research and are able to use word processors and some data-handling programs. For example, they are able to prepare some text and place this into a page preparation program, combining it with graphics for presentation. However, from the evidence seen, the school will need to ensure that more experiences are provided for students to create models, test predictions and discover patterns and relationships. In addition, opportunities for students to control events, either on screen or through external devices, needs to be provided. The school is aware of these issues and will review the provision made by considering the introduction of a taught course in Years 7 to 9.
155. In Years 10 and 11 all students follow a Key Skills course in ICT that has recently been introduced. This, together with the use of ICT in other subject areas ensures that students are being provided with their ICT entitlement. Students collect data and use a data-handling program to analyse the results and present their findings. They regularly and confidently use the Internet for research as, for example, in religious education to find information on various religions to support the projects they are preparing for their examination. The school does not

currently offer a GCSE examination in ICT because of concerns that such a course would monopolise too many of the resources and restrict other departments from using them. However, this is an area that the school will review as an option for the future. Overall, the standards students achieve by the end of Year 11 are broadly in line with expectations.

156. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9. In Years 10 and 11 it is satisfactory and sometimes good. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and they generally share the lesson objectives with the students. Planning is good and resources are generally appropriate; however, during the inspection, the activities students did needed to be more challenging. Teachers' expectations of what students can do and the pace of lessons needs to be raised to enable greater achievement. Explanations are clear and students of all abilities have no problems in understanding the tasks. The management of students is generally very good and they respond well. Students stay on task and support each other when they have difficulties. They do not review their work enough to identify how they might develop their practice or improve the quality of their work. This aspect of the work is not sufficiently emphasised by teachers. The computer suites and equipment are treated with respect and when students are asked to return the laptops for charging they do this willingly. During lessons teachers circulate and support students. They ask some challenging questions and students respond accordingly. Help sheets in their own language to help them understand ICT words and tasks support students who have English as an additional language. Learning assistants further support these students, in addition to those who have special educational needs. The school tries hard to ensure that all students achieve, irrespective of their ability. Relationships between students and teachers are good.
157. The ICT co-ordinator teaches students in Year 7 and provides advice to teachers when this is requested. He also manages the network, provides training for teachers as well as teaching students in the primary schools associated with the Education Action Zone. His expertise is not used sufficiently across the school and the inclusion of ICT in subjects and assessment of students work suffer as a result.
158. Monitoring of what ICT activities are included in subjects needs to be made more thorough. To support this the school will need to complete the scheme of work for ICT in Years 7 to 9, which was also an issue to be addressed in the last inspection. In addition, more rigour needs to be applied to the assessment process. The ICT co-ordinator reviews the final grade awarded by teachers and uses this as the basis of the final level of attainment awarded to students at the end of Year 9. This is unsatisfactory, because the ICT co-ordinator only uses his expertise if he is asked for support and, in a busy school, this rarely happens. To ensure that standards are maintained and students receive their full entitlement the school will need to review the strategic role of the ICT co-ordinator as well as the procedures used for assessment and monitoring subject delivery.

## MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

### Strengths

- The quality of teaching is good.
- The department is very well managed by the head of department and well supported by senior management.
- The use of assessment to motivate students and to raise standards is good.

### Areas for improvement

- Standards achieved by students at the end of Year 9 needs to improve.
- The proportion of students studying a modern foreign language in Years 10 and 11 needs to increase still further.
- The organisation of teaching groups in Years 7 to 9 should be reviewed.

159. By the end of Year 9 standards are well below the national average. Teacher assessments show that the proportion of students reaching an average level of attainment in 2001 was less than half what would be expected nationally. Compared with attainment in previous years this represents a declining trend.
160. By the end of Year 11, however, standards are broadly in line with national expectations. GCSE results in 2001 were above average in French, well above average in Spanish. The proportion of students gaining A\*-C in French was above national averages for students overall and in line with national averages for girls only; in Spanish it was well above average for students overall and above average for girls only. In both languages the proportion of students gaining A\*-G was above national averages. However the number of students entered for the examination in both languages was less than a third of the year group, which is well below the national average and makes comparison with national figures less meaningful. Results in 2002 show continued improvement in Spanish but a significant decline in French, caused by serious staffing problems. Since the last inspection there has been a marked improvement in results up to 2001, though the relatively poor results in French in 2002 have meant that the upward trend has been halted. The school enters a significant number of students for GCSE examinations in a range of heritage languages, often in Year 10, where the success rate is high.
161. In work seen during the inspection the standards achieved by students by the end of Year 9 were well below average. By the end of Year 7, however, standards are in line with national averages. High attaining and average students can write accurately in paragraphs. Some students begin to use grammar rules successfully and are able to use complex sentence structures. Standards of work in Years 8 and 9 are well below expectations. Standards and progress in these years are directly linked to the staffing difficulties experienced by the modern languages department during the last eighteen months. The majority of students, who experienced several changes of teacher and were often taught by non-specialist staff, made unsatisfactory progress. They still lack oral confidence and have not been given the opportunity to develop the skills necessary to produce pieces of extended writing; others, taught by qualified teachers, make satisfactory, sometimes good, progress. In lessons seen all students are making good progress in developing listening skills because teachers use the target language well. Students for whom English is an additional language achieve the same standards as other students. For them this represents good progress. Students with special educational needs are well supported by teachers and make good progress. In one Year 9 class, in which most students had learning difficulties, the class teacher and the support teacher knew the children well. They were able to use this knowledge to target support effectively and so helped them achieve above expectation in a listening comprehension.
162. Standards of work seen in Year 11 in French are broadly in line with national expectations and students make satisfactory progress. Students continue to develop good listening skills. Standards of speaking and writing are in line with expectations. In writing the best students have a good command of the main tenses and can write imaginatively using complex structures. They speak with confidence and good pronunciation. Average and below average students can make themselves understood in speaking and writing. Students, who begin Spanish at the start of Year 10, are already close to national average by the beginning of Year 11. This represents good progress.
163. Students' attitudes in lessons are good and help them make progress. Students behave well with very few exceptions. Most work well independently of the teacher and make a good contribution to the lesson.
164. The quality of teaching is good overall, sometimes very good. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. Teachers have a good command of the target language and use the language effectively and appropriately to help students develop good listening skills. Lesson planning is good. Teachers ensure that students develop a secure grasp of vocabulary, which is then used to develop students' skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing. In most lessons teachers plan the work so that all students are challenged, though this is often difficult, particularly in Year 9 where there is a wide spread of ability within individual classes. Some teachers use lesson objectives effectively. They state them clearly, at the start of the lesson, in terms of

what they expect students to achieve by the end of the lesson. However this is not done consistently. Review of objectives at the end of lessons is not rigorous enough. The department uses assessment well to help raise standards. Teachers have good knowledge of National Curriculum levels and GCSE criteria, which they regularly share with students in a form that they can understand. Students are regularly assessed against these criteria and results recorded. Students are given clear targets for improvement so they know what they have to do to improve the standard of their work. In marking students' work teachers sometimes give helpful feedback that supports the assessment process but this is not done consistently. In all classes relationships between teachers and students are good. Teachers deal effectively with minor disruptions. The use of information and communication technology in the department is good as are opportunities for extra-curricular activities. Homework is set regularly and always builds on work done in the lesson. It is sometimes not rigorous enough. Teachers sometimes set learning homework, for example, without indicating how learning will be tested. In the best lessons teachers have high expectations, set challenging work and conduct the lessons at a brisk pace. Students respond with enthusiasm and commitment. In a minority of lessons where this is lacking students do not concentrate as well.

165. There has been over the last two years a steady increase in the number of students studying a modern foreign language in Years 10 & 11. The increase in curricular time in Year 9 to allow some students to begin Spanish earlier is encouraging more to opt for a language in Year 10. However the two curricular issues mentioned at the last inspection, the organisation of classes in Years 7 to 9 and the length of lessons have not been addressed. Students are placed in sets for reasons other than their ability in French and cannot be moved without agreement from other subject departments. The result is that some students with English as an additional language but with a good, often fluent, command of French or Spanish are placed in lower sets. It also means that, by the time students reach Year 9, there is a wide spread of ability in teaching groups so that teachers find it difficult to meet the needs of all students, particularly the most able. This is affecting standards. The length of lessons means that some classes find concentration at the end of the lesson difficult and teachers have problems planning work that maintains the level of challenge for the whole lesson. Lessons are often not spread regularly across the timetable cycle.
166. The department is very well led and managed by the head of department and receives good support from senior managers. The department has a clear direction. The two new members of the department, one of whom is a newly qualified teacher, feel well supported. Departmental documentation is detailed and helpful. The monitoring of the department's performance is very good. There are comprehensive analyses of examination performance. These include detailed comparisons between GCSE results, teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 and students' attainment when they entered the school. Systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and the work of the department are very good. The department does not do a separate analysis of pupil performance by ethnic group. Departmental planning is very good. There are clear targets for improvement, with good systems for measuring success. Resources are improving. The department produces good in-house material to support course books. Display is good. The major staffing problems, which the department has suffered over the last eighteen months, are the main cause of poor standards at the end of Year 9 and in GCSE French. From September 2002 staffing in the department is stable.
167. In spite of its considerable problems the department has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection.

## MUSIC

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

### Strengths

- Teacher subject knowledge is good.
- The relationship between teacher and students is good.
- The students' behaviour and attitude to the subject are good.

#### Areas for improvement

- The accommodation is inadequate for effective music teaching.
- The environment of the department does not encourage good learning.
- Students have few opportunities to be involved in multicultural music.
- Students in Years 7 to 9 have limited experience in the use of modern technology.

168. The students' attainment by the end of Year 9 is below national expectations. Teacher assessments in 2002 showed that 44 per cent of students achieved National Curriculum level 5, or above, as against a national average of 71 per cent of students. However, very many students join the school with attainment levels well below expectations and with limited skills and experiences in singing and instrumental playing. Overall, the evidence is that, from a low level at entry, students' achievement throughout Years 7, 8 and 9 is generally satisfactory, even though the outcome at the end of Year 9 is still short of national expectations.
169. Attainment by the end of Year 11 is also below national expectations. In 2001 and 2002 students taking music GCSE have achieved passes of 83 per cent and 79 per cent respectively, in grades A – G, as against a national average of 97 per cent of entrants. Results at A\* to C were low compared to national figures. Over a four year period the number of students choosing music as an option in Year 10 has varied from a low of 12 to the present encouraging number of 20 in both Year 10 and Year 11. Present standards in Year 11 are satisfactory.
170. Students' work seen during the inspection shows that students' achievement is satisfactory in relation to their attainment upon entry to the school. Students in Year 8 are able to play melodies on tuned percussion with a good degree of accuracy and clearly enjoy what they are doing. They show a strong sense of rhythm and are individually able to give a competent performance of the tunes being learnt. Whole class performances of the music provided convincing evidence that most students are capable of maintaining their own part in group music making.
171. The achievement of students in Years 10 and 11 is good in several aspects of their work. Year 10 girls responded well, and with considerable accuracy, to the challenging rhythm dictations and showed very good understanding of the notation that they were using. In both years listening skills are well developed and students can concentrate well with the ability to focus on the listening in hand.
172. Within a group of students the ability to develop the motor and aural skills of music making varies considerably. Observation of students' practical work, at all stages, showed that whilst many were challenged, no pupil was unable to cope with the demands of the music.
173. Overall the quality of teaching is satisfactory. In all lessons seen the teacher showed a thorough knowledge and practical command of the subject. Relationships with students are good and have a positive impact upon how the students respond. They are prompt for lessons, settle down quickly and cooperate well. The teacher's expectations of students' achievement is usually high but sometimes the students' progress in a lesson is not as satisfactory as it might be because the teacher has misjudged the appropriate pace for the lesson. In a Year 10 class, in which new musical challenges were being presented, the students worked well. However, the teaching moved on too quickly, in both time and content, for the students to have acquired a firm foundation in the new skill. On the other hand, in a Year 9 class, the learning of a new 8 bar tune was extended beyond any measurable improvement in the repeated performances that ensued.
174. The students are strongly motivated by the teacher's encouragement and praise. Sometimes this is inconsistent and, occasionally, worthy individual performances are passed over with little comment. The teacher's presentation is, at times, severe in style, especially when making a reprimand. The unnecessarily intrusive sound can be at odds with the culture of aural sensitivity.
175. Departmental documentation is comprehensive and well organized. Assessment is undertaken thoroughly and leads to clear individual targets, of which the students are aware.

176. Accommodation for music is unsatisfactory and restricts the range of activities and, thereby, the students' experiences of music. The department is housed in a suite of four rooms and a store. The principal teaching room is small and inadequate for normal size classes. Within present arrangements the access to the electric keyboards is difficult and takes much time to organise, so inhibiting their use as a regular and consistent resource for class music making. However, the available space is not used well and there is an air of clutter. Generally, throughout the department, storage is not effectively organised and too many instruments lie around apparently uncared for. The same tired feeling extends to the display, which is often old and not organised with any teaching purpose. The general effect of the clutter and the poor display is to produce an environment that belies the place of music in a creative arts area.
177. Instrumental teaching is well supported by students, where it is available. A large number of students take advantage of the arrangements for piano teaching. The one lesson by a visiting piano teacher, which was sampled during the inspection, showed the teaching to be of a very good standard with the students responding very well. Violin lessons are also available but there are no opportunities, at present, to learn brass or woodwind instruments. Steel drum tuition is about to start, though this is not directly organised through the music department. No other ethnic instrumental teaching is available. Students support both a junior and a senior choir and programmes for past concerts show that these choirs perform both in and out of school. Students' musical experiences are considerably enriched by visits into school by groups such as the percussionists Ensemble Bash and by the London Sinfonietta outreach programme. Links have been made with these, and with other external agencies, to play students' compositions. Most of the students benefiting from these excellent arrangements are identified as being 'gifted and talented' and the music department supports these students well. Many visits are made to concerts and the opera and it is clear that the benefits to the students are considerable.
178. All the positive aspects of the report following the last inspection are evident and there has been a distinct improvement in the quality and quantity of the resources available. The department has acquired good equipment for ICT in music and also for general listening. Keyboards are plentiful, but the department has not addressed the issue of space for a programme of flexible practical activities.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in physical education is **unsatisfactory**

### Strengths

- The commitment and enthusiasm of teachers to develop the department and provide more varied opportunities for students.
- Willingness of many students to support the changes being made.

### Areas for improvement

- Recent changes and structures are not yet apparent in the work of the department.
- Monitoring and assessment need to be developed to determine the standards achieved by students and to ensure progression as they move through the school.
- Strategies to ensure that students of all abilities are challenged appropriately by the tasks set, including differentiated tasks to support the lower ability and extend the more capable.

179. Standards of attainment at Key Stages 3 and 4 are below average and in GCSE examinations 2001 and 2002, below those achieved in other subjects. Standards are better in Year 7 than elsewhere, with students of all abilities demonstrating sound knowledge of the basic principles of health related exercise, and the most capable an appropriate range of practical skills and techniques. However, in tests, fitness levels are low and a very few students are prepared to work hard to really extend themselves physically. In Years 8 and 9, there is little evidence that students build on their technical skills. Many struggle with the basic catching and throwing techniques and only the most able students show understanding and knowledge of rules, tactics or playing strategies in games. In Key Stage 4, students of all abilities prepare appropriately for exercise, demonstrating stretching techniques and some knowledge of the

physiological effects of exercise on their bodies. They are particularly responsive to very competitive situations with the most capable showing versatility in applying skills to different playing circumstances. However there is very little evidence that students understand the broader issues involved in the National Curriculum for physical education. Students are well behind in terms of their skills, knowledge and understanding. They follow instructions but are unused to being asked to consider the quality of their performances or those of others. Planning and evaluating skills are underdeveloped and there is little sustained activity or evidence of team play and co-operation among students.

180. Recent staffing changes have resulted in a restructuring of the work of the department to more accurately reflect the requirements of the National Curriculum, the progress made by students and the approaches of teachers. It is too early for these to be fully implemented, although it is evident that there is a more structured approach being adopted successfully in Year 7 and efforts to engage the interest of students throughout the school. The introduction of playing kit and higher expectations of pupil participation are beginning to have a positive effect.
181. Teaching is satisfactory overall. The newly qualified teacher and replacement support teacher work very hard to engage and sustain the interest of students. The school does not have a tradition of physical education requiring teachers to explain rules and procedures and subject disciplines and expectations to students. For some older students there is a reluctance to accept the changes and higher expectations and there are a number of challenging and difficult situations requiring close attention and consistent approaches by teachers. In the best lessons in Year 7 where expectations are high and students want to learn, teaching is lively and enthusiastic. Students respond positively to the challenging tasks set and are keen to contribute, answering searching questions which test knowledge and understanding and consider the quality of their work. Students remember what they have been taught and can recall key points accurately. In all lessons the information given by teachers is based on good levels of subject knowledge; they explain points clearly with an appropriate focus on the technical terminology of the subject. Groups are well organised, with students on task quickly, making good use of the available time. Students' responses vary substantially, from interest and enthusiasm in Year 7 to inattention and lack of co-operation in other year groups. Part of the reason for this lies with the planning of lessons. Tasks are not always appropriate, lacking adequate challenge and suitable progression in skill learning and application. Students of all abilities underachieve and behaviour deteriorates. Lack of provision for non-participants creates further opportunities for inattention and disruption.
182. The development of the new curriculum is constrained by lack of facilities both indoors and out and the match of available equipment to the activities undertaken. The school has been successful in gaining additional funding for 2003 to refurbish outside areas providing a wider range of opportunities in the future. In the meantime, insufficient attention is paid to the type of facility and availability in planning the curriculum. Curriculum monitoring and the monitoring of progress made by students are underdeveloped, contributing to the limited evidence of students' learning in physical education throughout the school. Extra-curricular sport has been very limited but recent strategies to widen opportunities have involved the local community sports providers in activities such as football, kick-boxing and street dance. Such links make valuable contributions to the life of the school.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

### Strengths

- A good amount of time is provided for the teaching of the subject.
- Results in the GCSE examinations are continuing to improve.
- The students have a positive attitude to their study.



Areas for improvement

- A statutory issue in Key Stage 4 needs attention. (The alternative certification course to the GCSE examination has not been presented for approval to the SACRE).
- Some students are not required to study Christianity in Years 10 and 11 and as such the statutory requirements of the Agreed Syllabus are not being met.
- Additional emphasis could be made in helping the students to see how their learning about religions might have relevance to their own lives and experiences.

183. At the end of Year 11, the standards of attainment in the GCSE examination are broadly in line with national averages. Of the 87 students entered for the examination in year 2002, about 62 per cent gained the higher grades of A\* to C and about 99 per cent achieved the grades of A\* to G. There is an upward trend in results. The standards of work seen in the lessons and in students' books during the inspection are largely in line with the standards indicated in the examination syllabus. The students doing the GCSE course have a sound basic knowledge of the two religions they are studying, that is Christianity and Islam and they can talk with confidence about the basic beliefs of these two traditions. They also have a good grasp of how these two religions manifest themselves in the daily lives of their followers and how they manifest themselves in the wider community, such as in religious buildings and special days and festivals. The students' ability to relate this knowledge to the more general questions about the meaning and purpose of life could be stronger. The students' written work is adequately developed and they can discuss and express opinions in a ready manner.
184. The standards of attainment at the end of Year 9 are broadly in line with the standards indicated in the Agreed Syllabus. The students have a basic familiarity with the major world religions, including Christianity and Islam. They are clear how many of these religions affect the lives of the individual believers such as in rites of passage ceremonies at times of birth, weddings and funerals. The students' knowledge and understanding of the basic beliefs that underpin these outward manifestations needs to be more significant as does their knowledge and understanding of the lives and teaching of their founders, such as Jesus and Mohammad. This would enable the students to develop a more coherent picture of the religions they are studying. In general the students are stronger in their knowledge about religions than they are in learning from religions that is in seeing how their learning might have relevance to their own lives and experiences. The students' written work is of a good quality and the students can express themselves well in discussions and question and answer sessions.
185. Overall the achievement of students in Years 7 to 9 and in Years 10 to 11 is good, as the teachers work hard to raise standards and ensure that students make good progress. Students who have special educational needs also achieve well as the class teachers and support teachers are aware of their needs and support them accordingly. The students who have English as an additional language make good progress as they are well supported by the English as an additional language department and they have good motivation to work.
186. Overall the response of students is good, sometimes very good but occasionally unsatisfactory. Where the response is good or very good the students show an interest in their work and respond to many of the issues brought up by the lesson. They also concentrate well and are able to sustain this concentration. Where the response is less than positive the students lose concentration and engage themselves in unproductive activities. This is the exception rather than the rule and is largely due to less satisfactory teaching which needs more firmness and a stronger lead. Otherwise the students are positive about the subject and they both listen to and respect each other's points of view and beliefs. In this respect relationships between the students themselves and the teachers is very good.
187. The teaching in Years 7 to 9 and in Years 10 to 11 is satisfactory to good in about equal proportion, though occasionally excellent and occasionally unsatisfactory. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. All lessons are well prepared, although more consideration to the production of extension work for the more able would be of benefit to those who finish before the others. Teachers use a good range of activities to engage the students and put across the subject matter. Most lessons have a strong religious content though some need to have a significantly higher emphasis on this and need the religious aspect to lead the lesson rather than just being incidental to it. Where the teaching is excellent, the students are encouraged to

give more personal responses to the explicitly religious issues being studied, and to reflect and consider the spiritual dimension of the subject matter. The pace in these lessons is brisk, purposeful and pleasantly firm. As a result, the learning is very positive and the students have very little time to dwell on unnecessary things. In the occasional instances of unsatisfactory teaching, this briskness and firmness is absent and so students have a tendency to lose concentration and their learning suffers. These lessons are also characterised by the learning of 'facts' about religions rather than looking at the driving forces behind them. In general lessons could have a faster pace so that more learning is done in the time available. Also more could be done to keep the students' attention on their work. Homework is set on a regular basis. The department uses assessment effectively and further developments in this area are already in hand.

188. The present head of department is on maternity leave and a supply teacher who is relatively new to the school is doing her teaching work. Two other specialist teachers teach in the department. One of them is a newly qualified teacher. The requirements of the Agreed Syllabus are being implemented in the school. Two statutory issues, however, need attention. The alternative certification to the GCSE course in Years 10 and 11 has yet to be submitted to the local Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) for approval. Also, for the students following this course, statutory requirements are not being met in that they are not required to engage in a study of Christianity. The documentation, including a subject development plan, is good. The department makes a significant contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural life of the school in its study of world religions. Its input to the specifically spiritual aspect of students' provision would be significantly stronger with more emphasis given to learning 'from' religions as well as learning 'about' them. No particular issues were raised at the last inspection. The department makes a good input to the standards of literacy in the school in its introduction, explanation and use of new words and phrases. Information technology is actively used in the department, particularly with the older groups. Resources are satisfactory and the accommodation and staffing are good.

## VOCATIONAL COURSES

### GNVQ HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

Overall, the quality of provision in GNVQ Health and Social Care is **satisfactory**.

#### Strengths

- The programmes extend the school's curricular offer to accommodate those students who may find GCSE courses not best suited to their learning styles, motivation or ability.
- The course imparts useful learning and practical skills to students. It also makes a very good contribution to students' personal development.

#### Areas for improvement

- Co-ordination of the GNVQ programmes in the school needs to be strengthened.
- INSET and support to teachers delivering GNVQ courses need to be enhanced.
- Levels of expectations need to be raised so that the more able students find the GNVQ course sufficiently challenging.

189. Standards of students' work in GNVQ Health and Social Care are in keeping with the national average for this subject. Students on GNVQ courses demonstrate considerable achievement as evidenced by their course work, their personal development and their increased self-confidence in handling both academic and vocationally related tasks.

190. In their portfolios as well as in their class work, students demonstrate that they are acquiring the necessary knowledge and skills for undertaking a vocationally linked course. These skills include researching an agreed topic, collating and analysing information, organising facts, summarising, and working both independently and collaboratively. Students have also

acquired presentational skills as well as skills for asking relevant questions and articulating opinions on relevant subject matters. They demonstrate their skills and their confidence in taking on the responsibility for self-learning and for completing successfully their coursework.

191. Students with special educational needs and those acquiring English as an additional language demonstrate appropriate skills and understanding so as to benefit from both the academic and the practical aspects of the GNVQ. Most students' work meets the national course requirements; some achieve beyond the threshold in order to attain a Merit or a Distinction. Students are responsive. Their behaviour in class is purposeful. They undertake necessary tasks and coursework seriously. Most enjoy their work and willingly take responsibility for completing their assignments. Relationships between among students and between them and their teachers are very good.
192. Two teachers out of the three teaching the course are unfamiliar with the practical approaches associated with GNVQ. On the whole teaching is satisfactory. Students are guided through the course requirements and are supported adequately. Teachers are caring. Students are given sufficient guidance and advice. Teachers address the individual learning needs of their students, keeping their prior attainment, their aptitude and any other special circumstances, such as English as an additional language or special educational needs requirements always in view. Much emphasis is placed rightly on the basic skills, including ICT, as these skills confer independence on students. Handouts are usually good; advice and guidance to students appropriate. While lesson planning meets course requirements, it does not always accommodate the full range of students' abilities and motivation. Some activities lack challenge, indicating low expectations or lack of familiarity with the nature of the course.
193. Students on the GNVQ courses are motivated and responsive. They research and analyse a topic with appropriate levels of involvement and make every effort to complete their coursework. Students normally work at their own pace and make satisfactory progress during lesson and over time. They are developing the necessary skills for working on their own as well as with others to complete agreed tasks.
194. The current staffing situation for GNVQ Health and Social Care presents the school with a challenge. Because two staff are new to the requirements and the teaching and learning styles associated with GNVQ, they require support, particularly with planning, preparation of materials and moderation of assessment. Since the last inspection there has been a number of improvements, particularly in regard to better and more resources, assessment and recording arrangements, and of better availability and use of ICT.