

INSPECTION REPORT

BONUS PASTOR ROMAN CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Bromley, Kent

LEA area: Lewisham LEA

Unique reference number: 100752

Headteacher: Mrs Pat Slonecki

Lead inspector: Andy Swallow

Dates of inspection: 3rd – 6th November 2003

Inspection number: 258573

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:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	11-16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	750
School address:	Winlaton Road Downham Bromley
Postcode:	BR1 5PZ
Telephone number:	(0208) 695 2100
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Appropriate authority:	209 Lewisham
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Angela Wright
Date of previous inspection:	19 th October 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Bonus Pastor is an 11-16 mixed voluntary aided Roman Catholic comprehensive school in the south of the borough of Lewisham, on the borders of Bromley. It is also part of the Downham and Bellingham Education Action Zone. The school is on two sites about 400 metres apart. Most pupils come from the ten parishes of the Lewisham Roman Catholic Deanery, with a small minority from surrounding areas. The intake represents a cross section of families with varying social backgrounds. Most pupils remain at the school for the full five years. The school is smaller than average with 750 pupils on roll and there are significantly more boys than girls in each year group. It is very popular and is over-subscribed. Although many minority ethnic and dual-heritage groups are represented amongst the pupils, very few have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is above the national average, but is decreasing. Pupils' attainment on entry is about average. One in six pupils have special educational needs, similar to the national average.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Bonus Pastor is an effective school which provides a **satisfactory standard of education** for the all round development of pupils. The importance of the individual is central to the school's successes. Academic outcomes are in line with those seen nationally. Satisfactory teaching ensures that pupils achieve their potential. The recently appointed headteacher shows a determination to raise standards further. In view of current shortfalls in improvement planning and a significant budget underspend, the school provides **satisfactory value for money**.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils' attitudes, behaviour, and relationships with other pupils and adults are very good.
- The school sets high expectations for pupils' conduct, promotes very well racial harmony and enables pupils' confidence and self-esteem to flourish.
- Pupils' personal development is good.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is not their mother tongue, is good.
- Links with parents, other schools and colleges and the local community are good.
- The recently appointed headteacher is providing good leadership for the school.
- The quality of evaluation across the school, planning for improvement and the use of the school's budget are unsatisfactory.
- The use of information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum is unsatisfactory.
- The use made of assessment information is unsatisfactory.

Overall, the school has made satisfactory progress since its last inspection in 1998. The key area for improvement, higher quality teaching, has been tackled successfully and standards have risen as a consequence. Satisfactory progress has also been made in improving the quality and availability of information about pupils' potential and progress, although there is still room for further improvement in the use of this information by all teachers. There has been insufficient improvement in the overall planning, teaching and standards achieved in ICT, and in reviewing the school's work as well as holding key staff to account for the standards that are achieved.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Performance in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
	B	C	B	A

Key: A – well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average. Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 9.

Throughout the school, pupils achieve satisfactorily as a result of sound teaching. Standards achieved by pupils on entry to the school are broadly average. By the end of Year 9, most pupils have made satisfactory progress, achieving average standards in national tests. Outcomes are often better than in similar schools, and have improved significantly since the last inspection. GCSE results are rising and are above average by the end of Year 11. They are higher than results in similar schools. Very few pupils fail to obtain a GCSE grade. This represents good achievement, given pupils' starting points at the end of Year 9, and satisfactory achievement overall, given their levels of attainment on entry to the school in 1998. Pupils from all ethnic groups achieve as highly as those from White backgrounds, and Black African boys achieve higher than national expectations. This is due to their very good attitudes to learning. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is not their mother tongue, achieve well. However, the needs of gifted pupils are not met as well as they might be. Results since the last inspection show good improvement overall.

Standards of work seen in the inspection match test and examination results overall and are average at the end of Years 9 and 11. However, ICT is not used effectively to raise standards.

Pupils' personal development is good. It is fostered well by the good overall provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are happy at school and have very good attitudes towards learning. They behave very well and their attendance is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a sound education. Teaching is satisfactory throughout Years 7 - 11 with good features. It is better in Years 9 and 11 than elsewhere in the school, and particularly good in English, art and design and geography. Pupils' learning and progress are satisfactory because they concentrate and persevere well and they respond very positively to planned activities. They could make better rates of progress if the information that teachers hold about their needs and potential was used more systematically to plan work, and to let pupils know what they needed to do next to improve. The curriculum is soundly based on the National Curriculum, with some good, emerging vocational courses in Years 10 – 11. Pupils have access to good support, advice and guidance and a good range of out-of-school learning activities.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall leadership and management are sound. Day-to-day management is satisfactory, whole-school procedures are efficient and not unduly bureaucratic. The strategic role of governors is satisfactory and they hold the school to account for the standards that it achieves. The recently appointed headteacher shows emerging good leadership and a clear vision for improvement. She is well supported by the senior leadership team. However, senior leaders are not yet sufficiently reflective and critical of the work of the school. Key aspects of leadership are unsatisfactory. There is too much inconsistency in the monitoring of the quality of education and the use of outcomes to raise achievement further. The quality of strategic planning for continuous improvement across the school is poor.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very satisfied with the school and have no significant concerns. Most pupils are happy to come to school, are positive about the teaching and the way that the school is run.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- develop leadership capacity across the school to ensure that it is more rigorously focused on improving standards of education;
- develop the quality of evaluation and improvement planning across the school to ensure a stronger link between all available funding and agreed educational priorities;
- increase the use of ICT in all subjects to raise pupils' achievement;
- develop further the use of assessment information by all teachers to shape teaching and pupils' learning more effectively;

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- ensure that all teachers deliver effectively the ICT component of all relevant subjects within the National Curriculum and the full programmes of study for design and technology.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils achieve satisfactorily throughout the school. They enter the school with broadly average standards in English, mathematics and science and test results are again broadly average by the end of Year 9. A higher than average proportion of pupils achieve five or more GCSE grades A*-C, and in some subjects good achievement is made between the end of Years 9 and 11. Standards at the ages of 14 and 16 have risen since the last inspection. There are no major differences between boys and girls' outcomes, although the performance of Black African boys is higher than that seen nationally.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are broadly average by the end of Year 9 in mathematics and science, and above average in English.
- Results are above average by the end of Year 11 and have improved since the last inspection.
- Achievement is satisfactory across the school as a whole, although predominantly good in music, art and design and geography.
- The achievement of pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is good overall.
- The range of out of school activities for gifted and talented pupils is good, although they are not always challenged sufficiently in all subjects.
- Pupils from different minority ethnic backgrounds achieve satisfactorily with the exception of Black African boys who achieve well in relation to national expectations.

Commentary

School's results in national tests

1. Standards in the national tests in 2003 at the end of Year 9 were broadly in line with the national averages for all schools in mathematics and science, and above average in English. The school did better than other schools in similar circumstances in English and mathematics and as well in science. All in all, the targets set by the governing body were met. Since the last inspection, results have improved in all three subjects at rates faster than those seen nationally. However, boys' average points score in English has fallen over the past five years and is now in line with boys' outcomes nationally. Girls' average points score has remained stable and is also in line with girls' outcomes nationally. The average points scores of boys and girls in mathematics and science have risen considerably over the past five years and are now in line with those seen nationally.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 9 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	33.3 (32.6)	33.3 (33.3)
mathematics	34.3 (33.7)	35.3 (34.7)
science	33.1 (33.4)	33.7 (33.3)

There were 145 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. GCSE results were above the national average in 2003 and they were well above those of similar schools. The governors' target for 5+ A*-C performance, however, was not met. Pupils' average points score has improved since the last inspection, following the national upward trend. Very few pupils left the school in 2003 with fewer than five GCSE grades at any level, and the school attained well above the national average for five or more A*-G grades. Hardly

any pupil achieved no graded GCSE result. This represents good achievement, given the pupils' starting points at the end of Year 9, but satisfactory achievement overall given their above levels of attainment on entry to the school in 1998. Pupils from ethnic groups achieve as highly as those from White backgrounds. However, Black African boys achieve higher than national expectations. This is due to their very good attitudes to learning.

3. Pupils achieved the best GCSE results in English, science and art and design in 2003, but disappointing results in drama. Trends in results in individual subjects since the last inspection show good improvement overall.

2003 GCSE Results

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	55.3 (49)	52.6 (51.5)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	94 (97)	88.6 (88.9)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	97.6 (98)	94.6 (94.6)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	37.6 (-)	34.7 (34.6)

There were 111 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Standards of work seen during the inspection

4. Standards seen in lessons and in the sampling of pupils' work match the test and examination results closely. They were above average in just over one in four lessons seen in Years 7 – 9, but above average in just over half of the Year 9 lessons. In Years 10 – 11 standards were above average in one third of lessons, but above average in just over half of Year 11 lessons. Overall, standards of work seen were average across the school. Standards were above average in art and design and English across Years 7 – 11 and in science in Years 10 – 11. Conversely, standards were below average in ICT in Years 7 – 9 and in design and technology in Years 7 – 11. This is because key ICT elements in the programmes of study of both subjects are not covered in sufficient depth.

Pupils' achievements

5. Good teaching in art and design, geography and music led to high achievement and good learning in many lessons in Years 7 – 11. Particularly good teaching in Years 10 – 11 in English, science and aspects of design and technology led to higher achievement and learning than in Years 7 – 9 in these subjects. Overall, pupils' achievement was satisfactory across the school. There were no particular differences in the achievement of boys and girls. Achievement is in line with pupils' achievement in recent years, albeit slightly lower than might be expected in Years 10 – 11, given good progress in GCSE courses over time. This is because pupils' attitudes to revision and public examinations are very good and enable them to achieve slightly higher outcomes than might be expected given their achievement in lessons.
6. The achievement of pupils who have English as an additional language is good. This is because of the very good specialist teaching and support provided from within the school's staff and funded by the Ethnic Minorities Achievement Grant. The achievement of the many different ethnic groups in the school is in line with teachers' expectations, given individual pupils' starting points, but there are some particularly high gains made by Black African boys and White Irish pupils throughout the school.

7. Pupils who have special educational needs achieve well overall, making satisfactory progress by the end of Year 9 and good progress across Years 10 – 11. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils with statements of special educational needs achieve particularly well, making better than expected progress throughout Years 7 - 11 because of well-focused support. By the end of Year 11, most students with special educational needs gain five or more GCSE A* - G grades. They gain better grades at GCSE in English than in science and mathematics.
8. Gifted and talented pupils are not challenged enough by the work in their lessons to reach their potential. However, they are well catered for out of school with many initiatives to broaden their experiences.
9. ICT is not used effectively across the school to raise achievement. There has been unsatisfactory progress on this issue since the last inspection. Teachers have benefited from receiving laptop computers and training but too many subjects are not meeting the statutory requirements for ICT within their own National Curriculum programmes of study. The levels of pupils' literacy skills are not a barrier to their learning across the school, but progress in implementing the literacy element of the national strategy has been too slow. Although pupils are very willing to listen to each other and are articulate in their contributions to discussions, there is too little extended writing in all subjects. Improvement in developing pupils' literacy skills since the last inspection is therefore unsatisfactory. Pupils' numeracy skills are sound and are a positive factor in helping them to make progress in subjects other than mathematics.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attendance is good and levels of unauthorised absence are very low. The school sets high expectations for pupils' conduct and the attitudes and behaviour of pupils are very good. Pupils' personal development is good. They develop very good social skills, very good moral understanding and good spiritual awareness. However, their appreciation of their own and others' cultural traditions is only satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The Catholic ethos of the school promotes very good relationships and racial harmony.
- Behaviour is very good; attendance is good.
- Unauthorised absence and exclusions are very low.
- Pupils and parents are very supportive of the school's work.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good.
- Staff present very good role models for pupils and a wide range of ethnic heritages are represented throughout the management structure.

Commentary

Attitudes and behaviour

10. Pupils' attitudes, values and behaviour are very good. This positive picture has been maintained since the last inspection. The strong Catholic ethos of the school provides a very good foundation for the development of racial equality and of pupils' confidence and self-esteem, their tolerance and self-discipline, and their respect for the views of others. The vast majority of pupils are polite and courteous to each other and to adults and visitors to the school. Teachers show clearly that they value all pupils, their contributions and achievements. The few who display challenging behaviour are appropriately and fairly dealt with through the school's behaviour code. The learning support centre, although only recently established, provides a positive and safe environment in which those at risk of exclusion and those reluctant to attend lessons are encouraged to work productively, to improve their attitudes towards others and build up their self-worth. The monitoring of pupils' behaviour on return to

their classes shows some early positive outcomes. The school stimulates in pupils a desire to learn and most approach their work seriously, prepared to concentrate, persevere and enter into articulate debate when given the opportunity. Parents have confidence in the school to work with their children to develop them into young, mature citizens. Pupils feel trusted and that their teachers are interested in their views. Movement between sites is calm and sensible at all times and is appropriately supervised.

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	295	6	0
White – Irish	40	0	0
White – any other White background	56	1	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	8	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	11	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	7	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	56	1	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	19	1	0
Black or Black British - Caribbean	16	0	1
Black or Black British - African	115	5	0
Black or Black British – any other background	65	4	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	15	0	0
Parent / pupil preferred not to say	12	0	0
Information not obtained	2	0	0

Attendance

11. Attendance is slightly above the national average and levels of unauthorised absence are well below those seen nationally. The school has maintained these high outcomes since the last inspection largely due to clear procedures for registering pupils and recording attendance at lessons and clear policies for checking and monitoring attendance patterns. There is prompt action when absences are identified. Pupils' attendance during work experience and work-related learning programmes is appropriately recorded.

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	7.1	School data	0.2
National data	7.8	National data	1.2

This table gives the percentage of half days [sessions] missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Personal development

12. Although there are significantly more boys than girls, the gender divide does not result in any inequality of access or opportunity. Boys and girls show an equal interest in school life and in the range of activities provided. Girls take the lead in providing music for assemblies and in attending prayer groups led by the chaplain. As pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are

well provided with role models and, where necessary, given help through mentoring, their contribution to the school community and its reputation is very good. The cross-cultural nature of friendship groupings is particularly strong. Pupils with special educational needs, and those for whom English is not their mother tongue, are particularly well supported and included fully in the life of the school.

13. Pupils' spiritual development is good. A calm tone is set at the start and end of each day by a period of prayer. Pupils respond well, joining in and sometimes leading prayer. They appreciate the ways in which their individuality is respected and speak positively of the school as a place where all are valued. Masses and retreats are well attended and are a valuable part of the school's spiritual dimension. In English, geography, music and art and design, there are many opportunities where pupils are encouraged to develop self-awareness and an understanding of the world around them. In citizenship, they show empathy, concern and compassion for others, developing an understanding of feelings and emotions and their likely effect on others.
14. The school promotes a strong moral code through which there is clear guidance on what is right and wrong. Pupils indicate their appreciation of the consistency and equality shown by staff and about how people should behave. Some teachers, form tutors and learning mentors provide very good opportunities for pupils to explore and debate issues vigorously, communicate their opinions and show mutual respect for different ideas. The school council provides a forum where issues can be raised, discussed and decisions made within the school community.
15. Pupils from diverse backgrounds relate very well to one another and they value the opportunities to mix with others. Their social understanding is enriched by good extra-curricular activities. All pupils have an opportunity, through work experience, to interact with adults from the local community. It is clear from employers' reports that standards set are high. Teachers enhance pupils' social responsibility further by providing opportunities for them to become involved in a wide range of charity fundraising activities, the provision of food hampers for the community and in leading annual remembrance services at the war memorial.
16. A wide range of heritages is represented in the school and pupils enjoy opportunities to explore aspects of different cultures. For example, in exploring different cultural approaches to the celebration of Christmas, in an English lesson when studying the poem "Presents from my Aunt in Pakistan", and in discussing traditional foods from different countries. In general, however, the rich cultural heritage available within the school is not fully exploited. There are fewer occasions than might be expected for pupils to explore and celebrate multi-cultural issues in art and design, English literature, history, geography and modern foreign languages.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

17. The school provides a **sound quality of education for its pupils**. Pupils achieve satisfactorily overall because teaching is sound and they have very good attitudes to learning. There is scope in individual subjects to establish more systematic procedures for using information about pupils' progress to help them to improve. Interesting visits and visitors to the school enrich the curriculum and there are good links with the community. Parents and pupils are very supportive of the provision the school makes, with the exception of the use of ICT to enhance learning.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **satisfactory throughout the school**. This marks a significant improvement in the proportion of lessons that are satisfactory or better and of those judged to be good, particularly in Years 7 - 9, since the last inspection. Consequently, pupils learn and achieve satisfactorily during their time in the school. Their progress is not always assessed thoroughly within individual subjects and useful whole-school information is not used as well as it might be to move

pupils forward. This is particularly so in Years 7 - 9. This is because not all heads of department have established rigorous enough marking and assessment procedures.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good relationships are evident between staff and pupils and pupils' have very positive attitudes towards learning.
- Teachers' insist on high standards of behaviour and are successful in motivating and engaging all pupils.
- Teachers use teaching assistants and other available support staff well to help individual pupils, particularly those with special educational needs.
- Assessment and its use are unsatisfactory.
- Pupils do not always have a clear picture of what they need to do to improve.

Commentary

18. The table below shows the quality of teaching seen across the school. The proportion of unsatisfactory lessons involves a very small number of teachers. Whilst there is no significant difference in the quality of satisfactory or better teaching in most years, a large proportion of unsatisfactory lessons were found in Year 8. The amount of good and very good teaching was much higher in Years 9 - 11 than in Years 7 - 8.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 131 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
4 (3.1%)	16 (12.2%)	54 (41.2%)	47 (35.9%)	9 (6.9%)	1 (0.7%)	0 (0%)

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

19. Teaching and learning are good or better in just over half of lessons in Years 7-9, rising to almost two thirds of lessons across Years 10 and 11. Teaching and learning are especially good in English, geography, music and art across all year groups, and in science, design and technology and citizenship in Years 10 and 11. In these subjects, teachers' knowledge and understanding are good and teachers have high expectations of the achievements of their pupils. As a result, pupils show high levels of interest, concentrate well and make good progress. Lesson planning comprises clear learning outcomes that are shared with pupils and tasks that are well matched to their different needs. These enable them to learn well. In the best lessons, stimulating activities and a lively approach grip pupils' interest and help them to move forward quickly. Very good questioning enables them to think and develop their understanding independently. Unfortunately, the highly skilled teaching in these subjects is not used effectively to extend the practice of other teachers.
20. In mathematics, modern foreign languages, design and technology, history, ICT and physical education, teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Whilst most of the teachers are knowledgeable about their subject, there remain too many instances of dull teaching strategies and over-directed learning that result in pupils having little time to reflect or scope to work collaboratively. In the few lessons where teaching is unsatisfactory, teachers have too low expectations and their lesson planning does not sufficiently take into account pupils' needs. This leads to significant lapses in concentration by pupils and inappropriate behaviour. Nevertheless, in most lessons, pupils have very positive attitudes and show a clear understanding that they come to school to learn. They are willing to co-operate and to engage in discussions and group work. Their levels of concentration and perseverance make a significant contribution to their overall learning and achievement, which are satisfactory.

21. A new learning and teaching policy has only recently been introduced and is not yet embedded throughout the school. Although pupils' reading and writing skills are not a barrier to their learning, many teachers have been slow to incorporate the literacy elements of the national Key Stage 3 Strategy in their lessons. Nevertheless, there are instances of good three-part lessons in English, mathematics and geography, of learning objectives being shared and understood by pupils, and of key words emphasised at the beginning or throughout the lesson. Pupils' numeracy skills are sound and help them to make progress in many subjects. In geography, for example, there are well-planned opportunities for pupils to enhance their use and understanding of mathematical skills and there are good examples in science of teachers reinforcing the plotting of graphs and the use of equations. This is still not the case in all subjects. The provision that teachers make for pupils to use ICT in all subjects, is unsatisfactory. Although some subjects encourage pupils to use ICT for coursework in Years 10 and 11, most subjects do not incorporate ICT fully into their lessons. As a result, opportunities for pupils to apply and develop their skills to become independent users of ICT are limited. The most effective use of ICT across the curriculum can be found in geography and photography.
22. Since the time of the last inspection the school has developed good systems for managing information about pupils' progress and this is being used particularly well in English, mathematics and music. Whilst all departments have established individual targets for pupils and are assessing their learning on a regular basis, the use of assessment information to plan lessons and to raise pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory. Marking is generally regular and there are some good examples in English and mathematics of teachers providing pupils with advice to enable them to understand what they are doing well and what they need to do to achieve better. Nevertheless, practice is inconsistent, both within and across all subjects. Consequently pupils' knowledge of their own learning is unsatisfactory overall. In general, the use of homework to develop and extend learning is satisfactory.
23. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good, both when special needs teachers and learning support assistants work with pupils individually in the special educational needs department, and when they support them in mainstream classrooms. The quality of teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs has improved since the last inspection. As a result, pupils with special educational needs achieve well. Teachers make good use of assessment information to identify and plan for pupils' needs and ensure that the support provided by teaching assistants, who are guided by clear, practical targets in pupil's individual education plans, is well focused. Pupils with special educational needs are rarely withdrawn from lessons and, when this occurs, it is to develop specific knowledge and skills.
24. The teaching of pupils with English as an additional language is good. These pupils are taught very well by the specialist staff who link well with the English department and the pupils themselves, to set challenging targets. Specialist teaching provides very good models of spoken and written language and ensures, through skilful questioning, that pupils learn new words and phrases. In lessons across the curriculum, teachers pay attention to developing pupils' spoken language but far too little to developing their writing skills.
25. The statutory procedures for pupils with statements of special educational needs are carried out well and the targets in pupils' individual education plans are sufficiently measurable. The co-ordinator for special educational needs makes good use of assessment information from primary and other schools, tests at the beginning of Year 7 and outcomes of end of year examinations to provide appropriate support for pupils with special needs, in line with the Code of Practice. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Good procedures are now in place for teachers to report pupils' needs, as they become aware of them, and to obtain additional support.
26. The teaching and learning of the highest attaining and gifted pupils are unsatisfactory overall. Not all subjects have yet identified regular and specific activities in schemes of work to stretch

these pupils and there are very few examples of targeted extension work in lessons. Pupils with specific talents are catered for well in music, photography and in physical education.

The Curriculum

Overall, the school provides a broad curriculum that is enriched by a good range of after-school clubs and activities, visits and visitors. There are sufficient teachers and assistants to provide effective support for pupils. They work particularly hard to overcome the limitations imposed by the split site, the nature of the buildings and general shortage of space. There are adequate resources for all subjects, with the exception of the number of computers available to pupils across the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is largely well structured and meets the needs of pupils.
- The school does not make satisfactory provision for ICT and design and technology.
- Provision for pupils with SEN is good.
- Extra-curricular provision and provision for personal, social and health education is good.
- Accommodation and resources overall are satisfactory, but there are too few computers to assist pupils in their learning across the school.

Commentary

27. The curriculum for Years 7 - 9 is well structured and allocations of time to individual subjects are satisfactory. The school teaches ICT skills directly but not all the parts of the ICT programme of study are covered in enough depth. The expectation that subjects will supplement this provision is not met with sufficient consistency. As a consequence, the school does not meet the requirements for ICT. Insufficient improvements have been made since the last inspection. The curriculum for design and technology also does not meet National Curriculum requirements, particularly in the aspects of the subject that involve ICT and the use of modern materials.
28. The government's Key Stage 3 National Strategy has been fully implemented in mathematics and in English. It has already brought about improvements in standards in Years 7 - 9, particularly through the use of well-structured, three-part lessons. The strategy has not been implemented sufficiently in science and ICT to have had an impact on standards.
29. In Years 10 and 11 the range of provision meets the needs of those pupils who are suited to academic or a mixture of academic and vocational courses. For a small number of pupils, alternative arrangements are in place to replace French and design and technology, and involve pupils in vocational courses in, for example, catering and construction at Lewisham College. In addition to GCSE courses, including Leisure and Tourism double award, pupils can study a General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) in ICT. Plans are in place to extend the range of vocational courses on offer from September 2004. Although, overall, the curriculum is broad and balanced there is insufficient cross-curricular provision for ICT, a weakness identified at the time of the previous inspection and the programmes of study for design and technology and science are not met in full. There are insufficient opportunities for micro control, electronics, and computer assisted design and manufacturing in design and technology, and a lack of computer sensor equipment to collect investigative data in science.
30. The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs. This is an improvement since the last inspection. On the whole, pupils with special educational needs are catered for well in mainstream classes. Teaching assistants and other support staff make good use of the practical targets in pupils' individual education plans to ensure that pupils achieve well. Some pupils attend withdrawal classes. Provision here makes a good contribution to improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. The good quality work-related courses in Years 10 – 11 are highly relevant to pupils' interests and learning needs. However,

poor ICT resources in the special educational needs department inhibit the learning of a small number of pupils who require this facility.

31. Provision for personal, social and health education is good. A detailed programme has been well planned to ensure progression in sex and relationships education, drugs education and healthy lifestyles. The key concepts of equality, diversity, democracy, autocracy, human rights, anti-racism and global citizenship are integral to the programme. It is well taught, pupils have positive attitudes and learn well. Satisfactory careers education and guidance is provided in Years 9 – 11 and there is adequate liaison with the Connexions Service.
32. A good range of out-of-school activities helps to enrich pupils' learning experiences. Pupils benefit from a number of out of school visits, such as trips to Eastern Europe and the Belgian battlefields organised by the history department, visits to Disneyland Resort in Paris organised by the languages department and visits to the Faraday lectures during science week. After-school activities in art, music, drama and physical education, and lunchtime clubs and revision classes provided across a range of subjects, also support pupils' learning. Take-up is generally good, with pupils from all ethnic backgrounds participating. Gifted and talented pupils are funded to take part in a specifically designed enrichment programme that includes Saturday morning astronomy classes.
33. Curriculum links with partner primary schools are unsatisfactory at present, although teachers of English and mathematics, for example, have used transition units to promote continuity in learning. Planned opportunities for visitors from the local community to the school are good. For example, visits by the police, local health representatives and local councillors further enhance provision.
34. The match of teaching and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is satisfactory. Most teachers are well qualified to teach their specialist subject and the school has made adequate provision for the continuous professional development of all staff. The quality of accommodation, although unsatisfactory in design technology, is satisfactory overall. Some curriculum time is lost due to travel between the two sites, but this does not impact negatively on teaching and learning. Most teachers take pride in the organisation of their classrooms, creating a positive learning environment with effective displays of pupils' work and commercial products. Whilst the general quality of learning resources is satisfactory, there are too few computers in the school to meet national recommendations.

Care, guidance and support

The school makes very good provision for pupils' care, welfare and health and safety. Staff know individual pupils very well and provide good levels of support, advice and guidance, based on a clear understanding of their needs. The school seeks to involve pupils in major decisions and values their views. Parents consider that their children are very well supported in their academic, as well as personal, development throughout the school. Some pupils would like to be consulted more regularly.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has very effective procedures for the protection of children, in line with locally agreed child protection arrangements.
- Arrangements for pupils' welfare and security, across the split site, are very good.
- There are very good and trusting relationships between pupils and adults.
- The provision of well-informed support, advice and guidance for pupils as they move through the school, is good.
- The school has effective induction arrangements for all pupils.
- There are effective links with Connexions personal advisers to provide good quality, impartial guidance on further study or career opportunities.

- Specific arrangements to support and develop gifted and talented pupils and to help the “aim higher” groups through Excellence in Cities funding, are unsatisfactory.
- There are now good arrangements in place, with the re-introduction of the school council, to take pupils’ views into account.

Commentary

35. Governors and staff take very good care to ensure pupils’ welfare, health and safety. They ensure that fire drills and emergency procedures are carried out carefully and that pupils’ movements between the two sites are supervised closely. Enhanced security measures have recently been put into place to safeguard further pupils’ well-being. Child protection arrangements are effective and appropriate; recent training for teachers has taken place. Risk assessments are generally carried out well for off-site visits, work experience and work-related learning, although not all school-based subject assessments are monitored with sufficient vigour.
36. Heads of year and form tutors support and advise pupils well, although not all registration time is used to good effect. However, in most instances, registration does provide a calm and positive start to the day, incorporating an opportunity for prayer that is sometimes devised and led by pupils. Heads of year and form tutors have sensitively identified individuals and groups at risk of underachievement and disaffection for special care and support. They support them strongly, for example, through the mentoring system and specifically through the attachment of learning mentors. Good quality and impartial careers guidance is provided for pupils aged 13 - 16 through the personal, social and health education programme and through the allocation of an individual *Connexions* personal adviser. Parents and pupils speak highly of this support. Transfer from primary and other schools is well organised, with timely visits to all the main partner primary schools and a strong emphasis on preparing to meet pupils’ special needs. Support for pupils’ continuing academic development across Years 6 - 7 is not well developed. It is satisfactory across Years 9 -10 and preparation for post-16 study and the world of work is good in Year 11. Pupils on work experience placements and work-related learning programmes are well cared for by liaison teachers and learning assistants.
37. The school provides good individual guidance for pupils with special educational needs and those who attend the learning support centre. Teachers and learning support assistants support pupils effectively in classes and this contributes well to their learning. The co-ordinator for special educational needs monitors satisfactorily the progress of pupils with special educational needs, using reports on aspects of their learning and behaviour from learning support assistants. The school makes the most of its own resources to work well with a range of special educational needs, as the provision of external support is more limited than at the time of the last inspection. Provision in the learning support centre features both curricular and personal development programmes. Pupils are supported well during their time in the centre and when they return to their lessons. Pupils and parents are involved in establishing a contract about improving their attitudes and behaviour, and pupils are made responsible for reviewing their relevant targets on a daily basis.
38. Pupils in Years 7 - 9 tend to feel that their opinions are taken more seriously than those in Years 10 -11, but inspectors find no significant differences. Most pupils recognise the value of steps taken to support them and give them better opportunities, such as the introduction of the mentoring scheme, the development of the learning support centre and the re-introduction of the school council. Pupils are keen to take part in decision-making processes and are willing to make sensible suggestions over matters like toilet provision, being allowed out of the school premises during the lunch hour, and the leavers’ ball. They are aware of the need to maintain the school’s reputation in the local community and the wider borough, and the considerations that have to be taken into account. They value the rewards and awards that they receive and use their planners well to record homework and personal goals.

39. Tutors and subject teachers are provided with good quality information on the results and achievement of all pupils as they enter and move through the school. This information is analysed by gender and ethnicity. The school has interpreted well the information that it has gathered and taken concerted action to set minimum targets for all pupils in Years 7 - 9 and additional targets for those in Years 10 -11. There are very good whole-school arrangements for senior staff to monitor the progress of all pupils and to arrange specific support for individuals who may be at risk of not achieving their potential. Similar use of information by tutors and subject teachers is inconsistent and not as sufficiently well focused. Specific arrangements by subject teachers to support gifted pupils in lessons are unsatisfactory. There are few examples of extended or challenging activities to match their needs. There is no up-to-date programme of visits and regularly planned support to help the Excellence in Cities funded 'aim higher' groups of pupils.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Parents have very positive views of the school and the education that it provides. The links with parents, other schools and colleges and the community are good and play a positive role in supporting pupils' learning at school and at home.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are happy with what the school provides for their children.
- The school's partnership with parents makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning.
- Care is taken to ensure that all parents receive a clear picture of the work of the school and good information about the standards that their children are achieving.
- Annual reports to parents vary in their quality and do not contain useful advice about how their children can improve in individual subjects.
- Although the school makes some attempt to seek and act on parents' views on key aspects of its work, these arrangements are not well developed.
- There are good links with partner primary schools, post-16 colleges and the wider community.

Commentary

40. Parents have very positive views of the work of the school, as at the time of the last inspection, and feel that they can approach the school if they have any concerns. They believe that the school provides a good education for their children. Many parents are prepared to make an annual contribution to the school fund and fundraise through the parents and friends' association to supplement the school's resources. Many also use pupils' planners well to communicate with teachers. The school makes some attempt to seek, value and act on parents' views, for example, to ascertain opinions on the regularity and quality of homework and the usefulness of the academic review system. Nevertheless, more could be done to seek parents' views on key aspects of the school's work on a more regular basis.
41. Communication with parents is primarily through weekly news bulletins and the *Pastorale*, the school's weekly newsletter. These are of a good quality and very much appreciated by parents. They contain general information about day-to-day activities in the school, key dates and many contributions from staff and pupils. The school's curriculum and options booklets, detailing what children will learn, are highly valued by parents.
42. Parents are kept well informed of the standards that their children are achieving through the termly progress reports, annual parents' consultation evening and academic tutor review meeting. Parents' evenings are well attended and parents find the termly progress reports helpful. However, pupils' annual school reports to parents do not always contain clear guidance on what pupils need to do next. There are satisfactory links with the parents of pupils with special educational needs. Individual education plans are sent to parents and those with children who have statements are invited to annual review meetings. Most parents of children

with special educational needs discuss their children's progress, at least annually, with the specialist staff.

43. Good collaborative programmes are in place with partner primary schools, the local Catholic sixth form college and Lewisham College of further education. The partnership with Lewisham College is allowing the school to offer more diverse courses, particularly vocational courses. Curriculum links with partner primary schools are not yet well developed. The school has many well-established links with the community and other outside organisations. Local businesses support work experience placements and work-related learning programmes, and good use is made of theatre groups and community services, such as the police force. These links enhance and enrich pupils' learning by providing additional experiences beyond the school and the pupils' immediate home environments.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, leadership and management are sound. The school is governed satisfactorily, with some governors making important contributions. The headteacher is recently appointed but is already showing a good understanding of what the school needs to do to improve further. Other aspects of leadership are currently unsatisfactory. The senior team is too involved in day-to-day issues and several heads of subject do not provide the unremitting drive needed to improve the quality of learning and teaching and to raise achievement further. Management is satisfactory at all levels.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Some governors understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school and challenge senior managers effectively.
- Governors are involved in shaping the direction of the school, but some curriculum statutory requirements are not fulfilled.
- The headteacher's leadership is good. She has high aspirations to move the school forward and to improve further the quality of education.
- Senior teachers and other key staff ensure that the school operates efficiently, but are not yet sufficiently focused on strategic issues.
- All leaders show a very high commitment to the promotion of equality and concern for the needs of individuals.
- The evaluation by key staff of learning and teaching is unsatisfactory.
- Procedures to hold staff to account for the school's performance lack rigour and are unsatisfactory.
- The school has satisfactory procedures to ensure that it applies the principles of best value appropriately, but the targeting of the budget to achieve stated educational priorities is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

Leadership

44. The headteacher is only new in post but articulates already a strong sense of purpose and ambition for the work of the school. Underpinning her vision is a clear focus on raising standards and a commitment to high quality learning for all pupils. She has a good understanding of national initiatives for school improvement, including the Leadership Incentive Grant, and is able to evaluate their effect within the school. Above all, she is keen to ensure that all pupils are valued and enabled to achieve well. She has the clear capacity to inspire and motivate others and to bring about change. Parents and pupils believe that the school is well led.
45. The senior leadership team is hard working and united in its support for the headteacher. It is not yet sufficiently reflective and self-critical in order to promote a shared vision of the school in the future, so that all staff know what they are working towards. Whilst all members of the

team are clear about roles and responsibilities, too much of their time is spent on organising and managing the school day. The quality of strategic thinking and planning for improvement is poor. Whilst the school reviews thoroughly its annual performance, the evaluation of the effectiveness of teaching on pupils' achievement is not rigorous enough. Specific outcomes are not used to inform planning for the future, nor to determine major priorities for spending. Although leadership is not complacent, it is not tackling all weaknesses with enough determination. Whilst individuals are efficient and have good ideas, their collective impact on school improvement is limited.

46. Heads of department are very conscientious but few have established a climate in which innovation is encouraged and in which teachers work creatively to enthuse pupils about their learning. They are not as effective as they might be, especially in leading learning and teaching, creating effective teams and relentlessly pursuing improvement. The school has not yet shared the effective practice in some subjects where leadership is good. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is led and managed satisfactorily. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of this area of work and provides clear advice to teachers and support staff on pupils' needs. This has a positive impact on their achievements in classrooms. The Ethnic Minorities Achievement Grant is used well to support pupils and ensure that they make good progress.

Management

47. Overall, the management of the school is sound. There are satisfactory procedures in place to enable the school to run smoothly on a daily basis. New staff undertake an effective induction programme to the school and those on short-term contracts are given sensitive and constructive support. Procedures for recruiting and retaining staff are satisfactory, although the school's contribution to initial teacher training is minimal. Support staff are deployed appropriately in key areas of the school, including the learning support centre. There is a programme of professional development, but this is insufficiently focused on the particular needs of the school, such as self-evaluation, the leadership of learning and teaching, ICT and assessment. Appropriate steps have been taken to reduce bureaucracy in line with the government's national workforce reform policy.
48. Senior staff collect and share much useful data, interpret it wisely to set realistic but challenging outcomes for individual pupils, and take appropriate action to improve pupils' achievement, particularly in Years 10 - 11. However, this rigorous approach is not always found in individual subjects. There is a useful whole-school framework in place to evaluate the quality of the curriculum and learning and teaching, but it has not had an appreciable impact across all subjects. Performance management of staff has been introduced but has not produced sufficient improvement in management, nor consistency of high quality teaching. Few heads of department have developed a systematic approach to monitoring and evaluating pupils' learning and achievement in lessons and through the work that they produce. Few subjects have detailed improvement plans linked to the whole school's priorities.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	3,204,981	Balance from previous year	292,624
Total expenditure	3,012,229	Balance carried forward to the next year	485,376
Expenditure per pupil	4,177.85		

Governance

49. The governance of the school is sound. Governors are loyal and positive about the school. They are particularly supportive of the new headteacher and the new vision that she has brought to improve further standards and achievement. The chair of governors has a

satisfactory understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and fulfils well the role of 'critical friend'. The curriculum committee, in particular, holds senior leaders to account for results of national tests and examinations, and plays an adequate part in establishing targets to secure continuous improvement. Governors know what they want the school to be like and show the capacity to play a more active role in helping to shape its direction. The most recent school improvement plan, however, has had little input from governors. It is not a sufficiently focused document to move forwards the work of the school in line with the priorities agreed by the governing body. Governors have not ensured that the school fulfils all its statutory duties in respect of the National Curriculum requirements for ICT and the National Curriculum requirements for design and technology. Governors are applying the principles of best value. They have identified comparative strengths and weaknesses of the school, have consulted on major initiatives such as the introduction of academic tutoring, and have challenged historic practices such as the relevance of an academic curriculum for all pupils. They are active in seeking training to develop further their expertise in educational issues. Teaching staff make regular and useful presentations to the curriculum committee and there are formal and beneficial links between governors and some aspects of the school's work, such as special educational needs. Budgets are prepared and presented efficiently, but governors do not evaluate sufficiently the impact of major spending decisions on the school's priorities. For example, there is a lack of clarity about the purposes and use of budgets for special educational needs at both strategic and operational levels and limited evaluation of the impact of learning support provision in classrooms, an issue raised at the previous inspection. Consequently, the school can only provide satisfactory value for money, given high levels of annual financial balances, without clear plans for future spending.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership and management are good.
- Teaching and learning are good and lead to good standards.
- Some higher attaining pupils do not achieve well in Years 7 to 9.
- All other pupils, including those from different ethnic groups and lower attaining pupils, achieve well in lessons.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11.
- Teachers do not consistently use the full range of teaching approaches in lessons and so do not consistently promote pupils' independent learning.

Commentary

50. Standards on entry to the school in Year 7 are above average. In 2003, results in the national tests taken at the end of Year 9 were above average, and represent at least satisfactory achievement for pupils. Results for 2003 were better than those for similar schools. GCSE results in 2003 were above average and much better than those for 2002. The results at the higher grades are above average and the number of lower attaining pupils who gained grades is above average. Pupils' overall achievement is good. Results for the higher grades in GCSE English Literature were at the national average, while the results for lower attaining pupils were above average.
51. Standards of work seen in the inspection were good, in line with test results. By the age of 14 most pupils can speak confidently to the whole class and in groups, listen carefully to the views of others and come to group decisions. They can analyse the techniques which writers use and talk about the effect of those techniques. They can write at length and adapt their writing to fit its audience and purpose. By the age of 16 most pupils confidently relate their own experience to that of the writers they are studying. They write extended essays which show good awareness of the exam grades towards which they are working.
52. Pupils' very good attitudes to learning contribute to their good achievement in Years 7 - 11. There is no difference in attitudes or achievement in lessons between boys and girls, between lower and higher attaining pupils or between pupils of different ethnic backgrounds. Pupils with special educational needs and those who are gifted and talented also achieve well.
53. Teachers have high expectations of pupils, especially lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. Lessons are challenging and interesting.

Example of outstanding practice

Part of a Year 9 lesson in which pupils read and wrote an information text.

Displays around the classroom feature 'brains at work'. Pupils have created collages based on texts they have read and have explained why they chose the images. They have written parodies of well-known poems and have categorised the themes of three poems in a Venn diagram. The teacher explains the link between today's work and the National Curriculum level for which they are aiming. She asks pupils to tell her what the triplets of writing purposes are and they know. The information texts are demanding. The teacher makes it clear that they are not to be read in detail but skimmed. Pupils work in pairs to generate a large number of suggestions. The teacher uses appropriate technical language in the discussion that follows – "elaboration", "neutral tone", "discourse markers" – and the pupils follow. They begin to write instructions on how to make a chatterbox. The teacher takes a risk by giving out paper so that pupils can actually make the chatterbox. Pupils respond eagerly but are clear that the writing is the main task. They are having fun as they set about this demanding task and work at their sentences until they get them right.

54. Teachers start lessons with short activities which encourage pupils to think and then use questions which promote effective learning. However, in some lessons, teachers do not give enough time for reflection and answers are taken mostly from volunteers. In other lessons, teachers work for specific periods of time with a small group of pupils of similar ability. This leads to very good levels of achievement. Teachers do not consistently use this strategy. Some higher attaining pupils in the middle groups do not always have sufficiently challenging work. Teachers do not consistently set challenging tasks when pupils read non-fiction texts. Pupils know in general terms what they are aiming to achieve and how to improve. However, teachers are sometimes not clear enough about what pupils need to do to be successful in a particular lesson and they do not consistently involve pupils in drawing up the criteria for success. Teachers allow time for reflection at the end of lessons, but often do not encourage pupils to think deeply enough or to talk in detail about their own performance and that of others. Consequently, many pupils are not sufficiently independent as learners. English makes a good contribution to the social and moral development of pupils and a satisfactory contribution to their spiritual and cultural development.
55. The leadership and management of the department are good. The subject leader has a clear vision for the future direction of English, teachers work towards a common purpose, have taken up the Key Stage 3 Strategy enthusiastically and have made good use of local professional development opportunities. The subject improvement plan is linked to the school's main priorities but is unsatisfactory because it lacks measurable criteria for success. The procedures for setting targets for each pupil and for helping pupils to achieve them are very good, but inconsistently carried out. Nevertheless, teachers work well together to evaluate each other's performance and to share good practice. The schemes of work are good and have been rewritten recently to take account of the Key Stage 3 Strategy and changes to the GCSE syllabuses. The department has made good progress in addressing issues from the last inspection. In particular, homework is now regularly set by all teachers and is imaginative. Also, teachers provide more opportunity for extended writing. The teaching of literacy is good. Standards of spelling, handwriting and presentation are good. There are a few examples of teaching which help to improve numeracy, such as the use of a Venn diagram to sort the themes of three poems. The teaching of ICT is satisfactory, with some good practice in Years 7 to 9, where specific schemes of work lead to the good development of skills beyond the statutory requirements.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

Pupils' levels of literacy are not a barrier to learning in other subjects. However, progress in implementing the literacy element of the Key Stage 3 Strategy has been too slow. Improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory. The literacy policy is in draft form, the school marking policy does not address literacy skills and there is little evidence of extended writing across the curriculum. There is good practice, especially in speaking and listening in science, geography, music, PE and mathematics, in the use of key words in mathematics and music, and in skimming

and scanning information texts in geography. A literacy co-ordinator with a clear vision and very good subject knowledge has been appointed very recently.

Modern Foreign Languages

Provision in modern foreign languages is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results at A*-C grades are above average.
- The quality of teaching and learning is too variable across the department, but where teaching is good, pupils make good progress.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good, with boys and girls of all ethnic groups attentive and co-operative in all lessons.
- Strategic leadership is unsatisfactory. There is no vision for the subject or focus on raising standards.
- Standards in Year 9 assessments are well below average.
- Assessment is not used consistently to support pupils' learning.

Commentary

56. Leadership of the department is unsatisfactory and improvement since the last inspection has been poor. Key issues in the report have not been addressed. Standards of work seen in the inspection are generally satisfactory. Teaching and learning are variable, but satisfactory overall. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good; they enjoy using the language and could achieve higher standards if teaching were consistently good.
57. Standards of work for pupils in Year 11 are satisfactory overall in GCSE examinations and in lessons observed. The proportion of pupils gaining A*-C grades is above the national average. However, less able pupils do not take French in Years 10 and 11, and the grades achieved by average pupils are close to the national average. GCSE performance has declined over the past three years. In work seen, there was little evidence of the highest levels in understanding or speaking of French, and much written work was not extended or creative. By the end of Year 9, teachers' assessments indicate that pupils' standards are below average. However, in work observed during the inspection, pupils' standards varied from good to unsatisfactory in line with the quality of teaching. Year 7 - 9 standards overall are therefore satisfactory, although most pupils' ability to speak and write beyond simple structured responses is limited. Pupils show little knowledge of French life and culture.
58. By the end of Year 11 most pupils achieve satisfactorily. By the end of Year 9, their overall achievement is satisfactory, although it is better in lessons where teachers have high expectations and an accurate understanding of pupils' needs. Boys' and girls' achievement is very similar; black African boys and girls achieve similar standards to other pupils. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. More able pupils do not attain the highest standards in lessons or in teachers' assessments.
59. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. In Years 7 - 9 teaching and learning were good in one in four lessons, and unsatisfactory in one in four. Pupils' learning was most effective where the teacher used French as normal classroom language, set a challenging pace with varied activities to develop pupils' language skills, explained what pupils would be learning, and used assessment to show them how to improve their work. However, this is not common practice across the department. In Years 10 and 11, teachers prepare pupils rigorously for GCSE coursework and examinations and pupils complete Year 11 with a sound understanding of how to achieve satisfactory grades. Pupils in all classes are exceptionally well behaved, responding well to challenges and working hard to communicate in French. They enjoy working in pairs and occasionally performing in French in front of the class. Relationships between staff

and pupils are positive. Teachers ensure pupils from all ethnic groups participate fully in lessons and all pupils co-operate well. Teaching is accurate but most teachers do not use French in the classroom for everyday communication. Pupils are in consequence reluctant to speak French in class beyond short responses. Pupils' work is regularly marked, but rarely are they told precisely how well they are performing and what they need to do next to improve their work. Similarly, assessment is rarely used to shape teaching approaches. Too much time is given to textbook and worksheet exercises, choral repetition or whole class listening tasks. Pupils are rarely challenged to communicate creatively in French. Two Year 8 girls word-processed a French menu as an extension of class work, but most pupils make little use of ICT to access and communicate information. Special educational needs pupils often use specially prepared worksheets and are well supported by teaching assistants, but are not always given exciting and challenging activities. The most able pupils often complete tasks quickly, and are not given harder work to make further progress.

60. Day-to-day management is satisfactory. Leadership is unsatisfactory. The head of department does not evaluate systematically the quality of teachers' and pupils' work and has no improvement plan to move the subject forward. There has been poor improvement regarding all the issues of concern raised at the time of the last inspection. The environment for learning on the Churchdown site is not conducive to effective learning. Teachers work in non-specialist rooms and are hindered by the need to carry resources and by being unable to display aids to learning. The time allocation for languages in Years 7 – 9 is below recommendations and hinders pupils' progress.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Year 9 and Year 11 have improved and are in line with national averages.
- Good leadership and management have resulted in considerable improvement since the previous inspection.
- Girls are not achieving as well as boys at the higher grades in GCSE examinations.
- Marking of pupils' work is inconsistent.

Commentary

61. Standards on entry to the school in Year 7 are in line with national averages. In 2003, results in the national tests taken at the end of Year 9 were average, and represent at least satisfactory achievement. Results for 2003 were better than those for similar schools. Results in national tests showed an upward trend. The Key Stage 3 Strategy has had an important and positive influence on this rise through the improvement in teaching since the previous inspection.
62. GCSE results in 2003 were in line with national averages. Boys did better than girls at the higher grades. Most girls achieved as predicted from prior attainment in mathematics but many boys did better than predicted. The results were better than those for 2002.
63. Standards of work seen are similar to those shown in test and examination results. Pupils acquire a secure mathematical foundation as they go through the school. Higher attainers develop good algebraic skills and methods of handling complex problems, especially in years 10 and 11. Lower attainers improve their basic mathematical skills, sometimes needing help with unfamiliar wording in questions, and needing prompting as to the next steps in solution of a problem. All pupils are developing their ability to talk about mathematics, and to say what they are doing and why this works. This is a great improvement since the last inspection.

64. Smaller classes, and satisfactory use of learning assistants, help pupils with special educational needs to achieve as well as other pupils. Teachers are well aware of pupils' particular needs and provide considerable additional support in lessons.
65. Pupils are grouped for mathematics according to their prior attainment. This, together with the higher proportion of boys than girls in the school, means that the profile of each class in terms of gender and ethnicity can vary considerably. There is little variation in achievement by ethnic group. Teachers make sure that in lessons all groups of pupils participate in discussions, for example by specifically targeted questions. This, together with good individual support with written work, and an effective programme of booster and revision classes, helps all pupils to achieve at least satisfactorily. However, the achievement of a number of girls in Years 10 and 11, as shown by their examination results, is affected by their levels of attendance. Their work in lessons shows at least satisfactory achievement. When achievement for pupils is good this is generally linked to the quality of teaching and learning in their mathematics' groups.
66. About half the teaching and learning observed during the inspection was good, with a significant proportion being very good. Teaching was unsatisfactory in one lesson. This is a great improvement since the previous inspection when teaching was unsatisfactory. Teachers understand how pupils learn, and are able to explain clearly, using practical methods and visual resources well to help them overcome any difficulties. Questions are used effectively to find out how much pupils understand and to make them think about more difficult problems. Pupils like this and say it helps them to make progress in lessons. Pupils' attitudes are positive, as is shown in their hard work, persistence and the way in which they help their peers. Relationships with teachers are good and this is a key factor in learning. When teaching is unsatisfactory, the work is too easy and does not provide enough challenge. When teaching is very good, the pace and high level of expectations fully involve pupils, generating a lively, purposeful atmosphere for learning. Oral feedback on work is good but the marking of written work varies considerably, with some very good practice, but some infrequent and with few comments about how to improve.
67. The good quality of leadership and management is shown by the very good progress made since the last inspection. The head of department has used a wide range of information, including lesson observations, test and examination results, to pinpoint areas for improvement. Planning and training have been used well to bring about improvement in the variety and effectiveness of teaching methods. The rate of progress has been slowed by some staffing problems but is now showing results in improving standards.

Mathematics across the curriculum

Pupils' numeracy skills are good and are helping them to make progress in other subjects. In some subjects, numeracy opportunities are included in their plans and pupils' skills are used well. For example, numeracy is a strength in geography. In science, pupils can plot and interpret graphs and can rearrange equations but at times make too much use of a calculator in simple problems. However, in some subjects, there are few opportunities to use numeracy. The school does not have a co-ordinator for numeracy or a numeracy policy to ensure the co-ordination of planned opportunities across the curriculum.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards at GCSE are well above average.
- The overall quality of teaching is too variable.
- Pupils do not develop good investigative skills because the planned teaching of these skills is unsatisfactory.

- Pupils do not develop their competency in the use of computers in science because statutory elements of the curriculum are not in place.
- There are very good systems in place to monitor pupils' progress, but they are not used consistently well by all teachers and the information generated is not always acted upon to ensure that pupils fulfil their potential.

Commentary

68. There have been satisfactory improvements since the previous inspection. Standards of work seen in the inspection are good overall. These are achieved because the teaching overall is satisfactory, with some good and very good features. Pupils' good attitudes also contribute significantly to their learning. Pupils' achievement in relation to their standards when they begin in Year 7 is good.
69. Standards at the end of Year 9 in the national tests are above average because pupils make good progress in Years 7 to 9. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Boys do better than girls. There is little difference in the outcomes of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds. Standards at GCSE have improved since the last inspection and are now well above average.
70. Standards of work seen in Years 7 - 9 are in line with those attained in national tests because pupils' skills of scientific enquiry are inadequately developed in lessons. This is due to a lack of specific planning by teachers for pupils to engage regularly in investigative activities. By the age of 14 most pupils can describe some energy transfers in familiar situations and devices. More able pupils can describe how selective breeding can result in offspring with particular characteristics. Standards of work seen in Years 10 -11 were above average. By the age of 16 most pupils understand and can explain the biological circulation of carbon from the atmosphere into organisms and back again. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good; this helps them to learn well. This is an improvement since the last inspection.
71. By the end of Year 9 most pupils' achievement is good in relation to their attainment on entry to the school. This is very much driven by the proportion of good teaching and, in particular, by the good attitudes that pupils show to homework tasks, specific learning activities and their general desire to concentrate and remember what they have been taught. By the end of Year 11 most pupils achieve well in relation to their attainment at the end of Year 9. Pupils in Year 10 and 11 have very positive attitudes and they are highly motivated to achieve well. Their willingness to engage in out-of-school learning and readiness to revise and learn key facts, make a significant and positive contribution to their GCSE performances. Satisfactory levels of support and encouragement are provided for pupils who have special educational needs and as a result they make satisfactory progress. Higher attaining pupils, and those who are identified as being gifted or talented, also make satisfactory progress overall, but insufficient challenge prevents them from making better progress.
72. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. They are better in Years 10 and 11 than they are in Years 7 to 9. Overall, the teaching of numeracy and literacy skills is satisfactory, as is teachers' use of homework. However, marking and the day-to-day assessment of pupils' understanding are unsatisfactory; they do not help pupils to improve. In the best lessons, teachers provide clear explanations of the science involved because their knowledge of the subject is good and they use challenging questions to develop pupils' understanding. They use time efficiently and incorporate a range of different strategies that help pupils to learn well. For example, Year 11 pupils made very good progress when learning about the stopping distances of vehicles because the teacher had planned a series of activities that were well matched to the pupils' needs. This included elements of challenge for more able pupils. In comparison, Year 9 pupils made good progress in a lesson on the effects of smoking. By the end of the lesson, pupils could describe the effects of smoking on organ systems, as an effective model was used to show them the effects of smoking on the body and the explanation given by the teacher was clear and accurate.

73. Leadership of the subject is satisfactory. It is well principled and established and there is mutual respect within the team. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory because standards have improved. The Key Stage 3 Strategy for science is developing in the department and this is helping to provide a good structure to lessons. However, there is still insufficient planning for the development of specific skills of scientific enquiry and, as a result, this hinders pupils' progress. Pupils do not develop sufficient competency in the use of computers to learn science as these statutory elements of the curriculum are not in place. This was an issue at the time of the last inspection. However, this is as a result of financial constraints placed on the department until very recently. Expectations of pupils' achievements are generally good but there is a lack of adequate planning to provide sufficient challenge to pupils who are identified as being gifted and talented. There are inconsistencies in the overall quality of teaching and learning and the implementation of the marking and risk assessment policies. The subject improvement plan identifies sound actions to move the department forward but currently is not a good basis for improvement, as it does not contain targets that are specific to the raising of standards. Management of the department is good and ensures that it runs efficiently on a day-to-day basis. Very good systems are in place to monitor pupils' progress and review patterns of attainment. This is a strength of the department. The accommodation and the range of resources for science are satisfactory although preparation rooms are cramped and technician time is too low. This hinders pupils' learning. These issues have not been addressed since the previous inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are improving in Years 10 – 11 as a result of the introduction of the new GNVQ course.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning in ICT.
- The leadership and management of ICT are unsatisfactory and very little improvement has taken place since the last inspection.
- Planning for the provision of ICT across all subjects in Years 7 – 11 is unsatisfactory and therefore pupils are not accessing their National Curriculum entitlement.
- The assessment of pupils' progress in Years 7 – 11, both within ICT and across other subjects, is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

74. In Years 7 - 9, standards of work seen are below average. The 2003 teachers' assessments of pupils' progress at the end of Year 9 were well below average, but standards have improved over previous years. This is because the schools' implementation of the ICT Key Stage 3 Strategy is improving teaching and learning, and pupils have good attitudes to learning.
75. Standards of work in Years 10 - 11 are now good. Previous poor GCSE results led to replacement by a GNVQ course. In 2004, the first cohort of pupils will submit their work for assessment. Pupils' current coursework shows sound knowledge, significant independent learning and a good understanding of ICT applications.
76. By the end of Year 9 most pupils achieve satisfactorily in relation to their attainment on entry to the school. Pupils show interest in their ICT lessons, their behaviour is good and they are very supportive of each other. They are eager to share their expertise, willing to offer help and make sensible comments when they are reviewing and evaluating each others' work. In lessons, groups of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds achieve equally well. Lack of proof reading and application of spelling and grammar skills are a weakness in many pupils' work. By the end of Year 11, most pupils achieve well in relation to their standards at the end of Year 9.

Overall, boys achieve as well as girls, and pupils from different ethnic backgrounds make similar progress to other groups. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory and they make sound progress.

77. Teaching and learning are generally satisfactory. In the better lessons the teacher models what the pupils have to do, checks their understanding and gives them precise instructions and timescales for completing tasks. In satisfactory lessons, teacher's subject knowledge, management of pupils' behaviour and use of homework and resources are effective. Pupils are helped to work for themselves, but they are not provided with sufficient information about the quality of their work and what they need to do to make more rapid progress.
78. The leadership and management of ICT are unsatisfactory. There has been unsatisfactory provision for ICT over the years and not enough improvements have been made since the last inspection. Technician support is insufficient and, despite recent improvements in computer facilities, the school will not meet the national pupil-computer targets for 2004. Resources are still very much underused across the curriculum. The standards of pupils' work and the progress that they make are insufficiently monitored by the head of department. Schemes of work and plans for the delivery of ICT capability across the curriculum in Years 7 – 11, are inadequate. The quality of improvement planning for the support and development of ICT across the curriculum is unsatisfactory.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

The limited good practice seen across the curriculum at the time of the last inspection has not been developed, except in geography, where some pupils now log the data from light sensors, display these in charts and integrate digital images within their project work. In Years 10 – 11 there are examples of well-planned and innovative uses of ICT to manipulate creatively photographs of the environment and architecture in aspects of art and design. Many teachers have benefited from receiving laptops and training, but too many subject teachers and departments, are not delivering the ICT which is statutory within their own National Curriculum requirements in order to enhance subject learning and to raise attainment throughout the school.

HUMANITIES

History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are improving and day-to-day management is satisfactory.
- Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and the quality of relationships between teachers and pupils are good.
- Overall, teaching and learning styles are too narrow because ICT is not used sufficiently to support pupils' learning.
- The leadership of the subject is unsatisfactory because aspirations are not high enough, there is insufficient direction and sense of purpose and there is no improvement planning.
- Assessment procedures and annual reports of pupils' progress to parents are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

79. Standards of work seen are below average in Years 7 to 9, representing satisfactory achievement in relation to pupils' below average starting points in the skills of history. Good pupils' attitudes and the positive relationships that exist between pupils and teachers contribute well to the satisfactory learning.

80. The 2003 GCSE examination results are slightly above the national average for pupils achieving A*-C grades and above average for pupils achieving A*-G grades. This is an improving trend since 2001 and represents satisfactory achievement, given pupils' attainment by the end of Year 9 in 2001. Outcomes of teachers' assessment at the end of Year 9 indicate levels of attainment to be below average, although trends are improving. Standards seen during the inspection in Years 10-11 are average.
81. By the end of Year 9 pupils can place the events and periods that they study in a chronological framework and communicate using appropriate historical terms. They make gains in their understanding of cause and become more adept at using sources of historical evidence to answer specific questions, although their understanding of different interpretations of history is generally weaker because they have fewer opportunities to develop these skills. There is no discernable difference between the achievements of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory and they make satisfactory progress.
82. By the end of Year 11, higher attaining pupils become more adept at using their own knowledge, evaluating and interrogating sources and constructing well-organised responses to specific questions as demonstrated in work on Nazi Germany. Lower attaining pupils make gains in organising and presenting work but their analysis of sources is weak. The good attitudes of pupils to the subject impact positively on learning.
83. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, with some good features. In a Year 11 lesson on Nazi Germany good teacher knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject, alongside a range of well-directed questions, skilful reference to GCSE criteria and the use of a range of resources, ensured good gains in learning. Overall, however, teaching and learning styles are limited. Lessons are frequently dominated by teacher talk, with many tasks over-structured, and there are too few opportunities for pupils to carry out investigations or to work collaboratively in groups. There is insufficient variation of tasks for pupils of different abilities. The department does not yet have specific targets for gifted and talented pupils or specific strategies for challenging these pupils, although effective use is made of additional staff to support pupils with special educational needs. As at the time of the previous inspection, the use of ICT to support pupils' learning, is unsatisfactory. Pupils' work is marked regularly and there is some evidence of emerging practice in providing pupils with advice to enable them to understand what they are doing well and what they need to do to achieve better. However, this practice is inconsistent. As at the time of the previous inspection, the use of assessment information to monitor and plan for the needs of different groups of pupils, is unsatisfactory. Annual reports of pupils' progress to parents contain insufficient information on the gains that pupils' make in their knowledge, skills and understanding of history, and inadequate targets for improvement.
84. The leadership of history is unsatisfactory. There is currently no clear vision or sense of purpose for the development of the subject and no improvement plan. The head of department does not systematically evaluate teachers' planning, the quality of classroom teaching and learning, nor pupils' work in their folders and books. Day-to-day management of the subject is satisfactory. Schemes of work are in place and provide a satisfactory framework for the teaching of history. They do not yet incorporate sufficiently the key messages emerging from the national strategies for teaching and learning. The department is well resourced and effective use is made of fieldwork activities, available staffing and accommodation to support learning. Overall improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are rising and good progress is being made by most pupils.
- Teaching is good, with a wide range of teaching styles.
- There is a clear focus on investigative approaches to learning which enables many pupils to stretch their thinking.
- There are very good relationships in most lessons that enable teachers to challenge the pupils to improve their work and achieve better results.
- There are some unsatisfactory aspects of subject leadership especially the inconsistency of assessment processes and progress information shared with pupils, and the quality of planning for the improvement of the subject.
- Inconsistencies in lesson planning do not ensure that all pupils are sufficiently challenged to achieve their potential.
- There is unsatisfactory use of ICT to raise further pupils' achievements.

Commentary

85. Standards of work seen during the inspection are average. These standards reflect the attainment of pupils by the end of Years 9 and 11 and the good progress that they make in Years 7 - 11 in developing enquiry skills, within an appropriate range of places and themes. However, pupils' written work is of slightly lower quality than their oral work, and the most able did not achieve any of the top grades in the 2003 GCSE examinations. Pupils' learning is good because teaching is good and attitudes in lessons are often very good. As a result, achievement by the end of Year 9 is good in relation to standards of attainment on entry to the school, and the same good rate of progress is seen in Years 10 -11.
86. Outcomes of end of Year 9 teachers' assessments and Year 11 GCSE examinations are at or just above the national average. A noticeable number of boys, from a range of ethnic backgrounds, just fail to achieve the higher GCSE grades. The school provides a range of support activities but has not yet resolved this problem. Other results show no significant differences between any groups of pupils.
87. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. Good teaching is the result of good planning that encourages teachers to set open-ended problems that engage and extend pupils. This helps to meet the need for a better match of work to pupils' differing abilities, as identified in the previous inspection. Recent training in the teaching of 11 -14 year-olds has clearly had an impact and added to the already impressive range of techniques. Field studies are well used, resulting in some exceptional work by 15 and 16 year-olds that incorporates very high quality use of ICT.

Example of outstanding practice

Part of a Year 9 geography lesson with a high ability group following enquiries into earthquakes.

The pupils were engrossed in highly detailed information about the occurrence of earthquakes around the world. The teacher had logged on to a website and had presented a list of recent quakes on the interactive whiteboard. Pupils drove the teacher around the information in response to the question: "how frequently do earthquakes occur?" Not only were they amazed by the results but also began to develop a feel for prediction of the most vulnerable places and patterns within these findings. Appetites fully whetted, they were then offered a news clip of one of the San Andreas movements and responded very well to the challenge of, not merely answering anticipated questions, but solving problems about the speed and duration of shockwaves from some very indirect clues on screen. All this was achieved with speed and a high degree of accuracy.

88. However, the teaching of 11 - 14 year-olds is not always linked closely enough to the National Curriculum programmes of study and grade descriptors and, as a result, teachers still do not stretch all pupils. This is particularly the case with gifted and talented pupils. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.

89. The assessment of pupils' work is much improved since the previous inspection, but marking remains inconsistent and the comments made to pupils about their work are not always useful in suggesting ways in which they can improve. Pupils enjoy the subject, especially as they are often asked to work together to solve geographical problems. At these times pupils mix well and collaborate effectively. Teachers too work skilfully, prompting and probing, without providing easy solutions. Pupils rise to the challenges set and there are very few instances of poor or 'off task' behaviour.
90. The department is well managed. Resources are good and well used by the teachers to offer the varied learning experiences to the pupils. Overall, leadership is satisfactory. There is a sense of purpose and direction across the team of teachers, although the quality of subject improvement planning is unsatisfactory. Evaluation of the standards achieved in the department is satisfactory. There has been sound improvement since the last inspection.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

Provision in design and technology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Display and exemplar materials used to support learning are of very high quality in textiles.
- Pupils are well motivated by the enthusiasm of their teachers and this leads to good behaviour and attitudes to learning.
- Programmes of study do not meet the full requirements of the National Curriculum.
- Teachers' planning does not enable all pupils to achieve their full potential.
- The marking of pupils' work does not always provide sufficient information to help them to improve.
- GCSE results in Graphics are well below average.

Commentary

91. Standards of work seen during the inspection are below average. This is because teaching is inconsistent, lessons do not sufficiently challenge higher attaining pupils and the use of ICT is unsatisfactory. As a result, pupils' overall achievement by the end of Year 9 in relation to their standards on entry in Year 7 is just satisfactory. However, achievement in Years 10 and 11 is good because teaching is more focused and pupils are held more accountable for the standards of work that they produce.
92. The 2003 GCSE results for design and technology at A*-C grades and A*-G grades are average. This shows an improvement on previous years. However, results in graphics are well below average. Consequently, design and technology is one of the lowest performing subjects in the school.
93. Standards by the end of Year 9 are below average. By the age of 14, pupils can use tools in a safe and appropriate manner, but knowledge about materials, their characteristics and classification is unsatisfactory. Although there is a good structured approach in textiles, pupils' skills in design presentation are generally not developed sufficiently to allow more to reach the higher levels. Pupils' access to, and use of, appropriate ICT resources are unsatisfactory and this is holding back their progress.
94. Teaching and learning are overall satisfactory; they are good in Years 10 - 11. Teachers are well motivated, organised and have very good subject knowledge. This clearly inspires pupils to enjoy their work, allows good individual support and ensures practical tasks are completed

competently. Pupils' presentation skills are less well developed and some folders in resistant materials and graphics lack care and attention to detail. In Years 10 - 11 teachers' intervention to support pupils' progress is particularly good and very effective when exemplar materials are used to set standards and target improvement. Excellent displays and pupils' past folders are used well to motivate and raise the aspirations of pupils studying GCSE textiles. Teachers offer wider opportunities for pupils to show initiative and develop their independence. There is a good range of questioning to challenge pupils' thinking and listening and to engage them in debate. Lesson planning is inconsistent, however, and tasks are not always matched to pupils' needs in Years 7 - 9. The teaching of key literacy and numeracy skills is not planned, but pupils are not hindered in their learning as a result. Teaching assistants and learning mentors are used effectively to provide support for pupils with special educational needs and consequently pupils make good progress. On the other hand, little specific work is provided to extend the skills of gifted and talented pupils. Pupils from the various ethnic groups achieve satisfactorily and there are no differences in the rates at which they learn.

95. Leadership and management are both satisfactory. Overall there has been satisfactory progress since the last inspection. Teachers work towards a common purpose, the department is well organised and provides a safe and effective learning environment for most classes. The technical support for the subject is of high quality. There is regular assessment of pupils' work in Years 7 - 9 and the head of department keeps a close record of progress. Procedures for using the outcomes of assessments in Years 10 - 11 are good in textiles. There is regular marking of pupils' work and helpful oral feedback to individual pupils. At present, the Year 7 - 9 curriculum is unsatisfactory because there is insufficient opportunity for pupils to study electronics and to use ICT and modern materials. A narrow range of courses is studied at GCSE. A small number of classes are taught out of specialist rooms and this affects the progress that pupils make, particularly in textiles. The subject improvement plan is unhelpful in moving standards forward in that it lacks specific and measurable criteria for success. The subject is adequately funded but too little money has been spent on modern technologies in the past and current facilities require significant investment.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

Provision in art and design is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good and standards are above average.
- The standard of photography is exceptionally good.
- Pupils develop judgement and express their personal opinions well when writing about art.
- Creative printmaking is understood and applied well.
- Pupils do not use computers to create or research art in Years 7 to 9.
- Pupils do not visit art galleries in Years 7 to 9.
- Pupils are not sufficiently familiar with the art of other cultures.

Commentary

96. There has been good improvement in art since the last inspection. Standards of work seen in the inspection are now above average, and particularly so in photography. These standards are achieved because teaching is well focused on raising awareness and skills. Pupils have a positive attitude. They show interest in their work and make good progress.
97. Results in the 2003 GCSE examinations are above average. This is part of a continuing trend in improvement. Art is one of the best performing subjects in the school, and both boys and girls achieve better than the national average at the higher grades. The department is effective

at achieving higher grades with lower and average ability pupils, but less successful in enabling gifted and talented pupils to achieve the very highest grades.

98. Sketchbooks show that pupils arrive with very variable levels of skills and experiences in art. By the age of 14 the majority of pupils acquire essential skills in the use of line, tone, colour and texture and in tests are working to the expected national level. Pupils have a good understanding of a range of different artists' work and regularly write about what they see and think when looking at art. They use the correct art vocabulary due to the regular emphasis on new words by teachers. Pupils do not have experience of using computers to research artists' work or to create art and there are only limited opportunities for three-dimensional work on the site. Some pupils benefit by working with an artist-in-residence in a community art programme but this is not available for all pupils. By the age of 16, pupils gain a better understanding of historical and contemporary art by visiting an art gallery. In photography, pupils are able to use traditional darkroom techniques and new digital camera processes to an exceptionally high standard. Creative printmaking skills are well developed. Pupils are able to use art to express their religious and moral thoughts. In art, lower ability pupils lack confidence in first-hand drawing and are still over-reliant on copied images. In all years, study is mainly focused on twentieth century European art and pupils do not sufficiently explore the art of other cultures.
99. Teaching and learning are good. A strength of teaching is the regular individual craft demonstration, such as when introducing pupils to mono-printing. Teachers are equally attentive to boys and girls and to pupils of different ethnic groups. This results in all pupils having a good understanding of how to meet lesson objectives. Work is regularly marked and pupils are provided with useful support sheets and written feedback which enables them to know what they have to do to improve. Management of immature boys' behaviour is, however, not always effective and this results in little, if any, progress for these boys.

Example of outstanding practice

Provision for Year 10 photography.

Photography lessons are exceptionally purposeful. Homework is followed through and every pupil is closely monitored and recorded to ensure that every topic is completed successfully. Darkroom skills of printing and developing are acquired through brisk, extremely clear explanation and demonstration by the teacher. Pupils learn very well by repetition and rehearsal of techniques. Following a study visit to the Docklands, pupils are able to manipulate creatively their photographs of architecture and the environment, using the same computer system used by industry. Composition and aesthetic values are strongly developed by the study and written analysis of professional photographers' work. It is this exposure to professional standards, the use of professional equipment and the constant teacher emphasis on quality that results in pupils of all ability levels producing work of the highest calibre.

100. Leadership is good and this has led to improvement. Management is good and teachers in the department understand what is expected of them. Monitoring of teaching has led to improvement in meeting examination requirements. Following a recent review, the department is now provided with clear and useful subject documentation. Travel between the split sites regularly results in pupils arriving late for the beginning of lessons and this has yet to be resolved.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The head of department is enthusiastic, committed and hardworking and has a clear vision for the subject.
- Teaching is good. Lessons are well planned and structured and good use is made of ICT.
- Pupils' learning and achievement are good across all years.
- The use of assessment information to monitor pupils' progress is good.
- Marking is unsatisfactory because it does not indicate the levels at which pupils are working nor give specific advice about what pupils must do next to improve.

Commentary

101. GCSE A*-C results were just below average in 2003. Year 11 standards of pupils' work seen are average. This represents good achievement, given their below average attainment recorded at the end of Year 9.
102. The most recent teachers' assessments indicate that pupils' standards at the end of Year 9 are above average. These pupils came into the school with average musical skills. They achieve well therefore during Years 7 - 9. Standards of work seen show that the majority of pupils are working at national expectations across Years 7 - 9. Pupils achieve well because teaching is good and they receive good quality support from visiting instrumental teachers. There are no discernible differences in achievement between pupils from different ethnic minority backgrounds. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their acquisition of musical skills, knowledge and understanding and achieve well throughout the school.
103. The quality of the teaching and learning in the subject is good in Years 7, 8, 9 and 11 and very good in Year 10. Pupils learn well because lessons are planned effectively and contain appropriate learning objectives which are met through a variety of linked activities. Pupils record and improve their work through good use of ICT. Teachers use a good range of teaching styles and strategies to enthuse pupils, working at a good pace. Relationships are good and pupils have good attitudes to learning, contributing appropriately to discussions and using and sharing musical equipment sensibly. Systems used to record and measure pupils' progress and achievements in lessons are good. They are linked to whole school information and used well to shape teaching. The department has identified gifted and talented pupils and plans effectively to cater for their needs. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, although planning lacks specific references to these aspects and opportunities are consequently missed. Provision to reinforce pupils' basic literacy and numeracy skills is satisfactory. However, the marking of pupils' written work is unsatisfactory because teachers' comments tend to focus on effort at the expense of specific comments about the knowledge, understanding and skills that pupils are developing and advice about what they need to do to improve.
104. The department is well led and managed by an enthusiastic and committed teacher who has raised standards in music and has a clear vision for future improvement. However, there is no current improvement plan. Limited monitoring of teaching and learning has taken place, and overall procedures for evaluating the work in the subject are unsatisfactory. Subject documentation is good overall. The department handbook contains useful guidance but no information on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, nor on the contribution of the subject to pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. Music offers a good range of extra-curricular activities that enrich pupils' musical development, including several ensembles, a choir and an orchestra, tuition on brass, woodwind and percussion instruments and some excellent teaching of singing. Music has made good progress since the last inspection. The head of department has undertaken appropriate staff development in recent years and this has contributed positively to improvements.

Drama

Provision in drama is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good in Year 11.
- Pupils entering Year 10 do not have the expected level of skill because they do not study the subject in Years 7 to 9.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good in Year 10 and very good in Year 11.
- GCSE results are too low.
- Standards reached by lower attaining pupils are very good.

Commentary

105. The 2003 GCSE results improved considerably from the previous year, but for the higher grades, the results were well below average. However, one-third of pupils were within two marks of gaining a higher grade. The results of lower attaining pupils were above the national average. The target which the school has set for 2004 is challenging and current evidence indicates that it will be met.
106. Standards of work seen in the inspection were satisfactory in Year 10 and good in Year 11. The difference can be explained by the fact that pupils in Year 10 are still acquiring the basic skills of the subject. By the age of 16, most pupils can work well together to produce pieces which show good understanding of complex social situations and good use of gesture, movement, intonation and language. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Year 10 and good in Year 11. Some higher attaining pupils produce unsatisfactory written work. Gifted and talented pupils and lower attaining pupils achieve well in lessons.
107. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Year 10 and good in Year 11. In Year 10, pupils co-operate in planning and performance, but are not sufficiently involved in the evaluation and refinement of drama techniques. Some of the pupils also produced a brief drama and dance presentation for their year group assembly which showed good self-discipline and teamwork, made a succinct point about co-operation and fully engaged the audience. In Year 11, pupils model good practice for the rest of the class, perform with great concentration and insight into the situations they are depicting and then evaluate their own performance and that of others. Drama makes a good contribution to the social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of pupils through its practical engagement with social issues, its work with theatre companies and its productions linked to National Holocaust Memorial Day.
108. The drama teacher has a clear vision for the future of the subject and communicates to pupils his high expectations. The schemes of work are good and promote systematic learning. Drama makes a good contribution to the extra-curricular provision of the school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education (PE) is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- As a result of teachers' encouragement, pupils work well in both collaborative and competitive situations.
- Teachers' questioning and pupils' responses are good in gymnastics and dance.
- The teaching of skills is progressive in games lessons and pupils respond with enthusiasm.
- The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are ineffective in improving standards.
- The quality of planning for teaching and learning is inconsistent across the department.

- Teachers' assessments of pupils' progress are not used well enough to plan work to meet the needs of all pupils, particularly those with special educational needs.

Commentary

109. Pupils have good attitudes to PE, participate with enthusiasm and gain a good understanding of leading and organising activities for younger pupils. In Years 10 and 11 PE extends pupils' personal development through the Junior Sports Leaders Award. Achievement in Years 7-11 is sound. Teaching is satisfactory but lacks the challenge and verve needed to ensure that pupils' learning and achievement lead to improved standards.
110. In 2003 pupils took the GCSE short course in PE. Just under half attained the higher grades A* - C and a good proportion attained grades A* - G. Levels gained by pupils in their examinations in PE are slightly lower than those attained in their other subjects. Proportionate to entry, significantly fewer girls achieved the higher grades than boys.
111. Teachers' assessments of pupils' National Curriculum attainments by the end of Year 9 in 2003 show that they are below those expected nationally. There are no significant differences between the performances of boys and girls and between pupils from different ethnic backgrounds. Although boys dominate the higher levels of attainment, pupils from different ethnic groups attain equally highly. However, standards of work seen in the inspection were in line with national expectations for most pupils in Year 9. This difference between teachers' previous assessments and present Year 9 standards can be attributed to the inexperience of some staff in assessing pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding, then making an overall judgement across all aspects of the subject. Standards of work seen in Years 10-11 are average.
112. By the age of 14 most pupils can display average levels of ball skills which they can apply in games, such as soccer and rugby. In gymnastics, pupils' skills are sound, but their understanding of how to link skills to create a sequence of movements is less secure. In dance, pupils can perform a set study and work creatively with their peers to create their own dances. Standards in work seen in Year 11 were average in core skills and GCSE PE. Most pupils by the age of 16 can use their ball skills successfully in games, demonstrating their understanding of tactics and how they are applied. Pupils' good collaborative and competitive attitudes to games enhance their learning and standards. High attaining pupils' GCSE project work is well above average, and displays evidence of research skills, and good presentation supported by the use of ICT. Provision for pupils with special education needs is satisfactory in Years 7 - 9 but unsatisfactory in Years 10-11. It is unsatisfactory overall.
113. Average and higher achieving pupils makes satisfactory progress in all years. Games practices are progressive in Years 7 and 8, building pupils' skills and placing them under pressure through appropriate levels of competition. In Year 9 pupils begin to gain an understanding of the tactics required to be a successful games player. In Years 10 and 11 pupils use their knowledge of the short and long term effects of exercise on the body appropriately to support their theoretical work on the principles of training.
114. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In all lessons warm-up and cool-down sessions are well taught. In a Year 7 rugby lesson, the fast warm-up activities engaged the pupils immediately in their learning. The clarity of instructions and accurate teacher demonstration of the tasks motivated the pupils who practised hard and learned quickly. The practices were progressive in their difficulty, but the teacher's feedback was insufficiently targeted to meet the needs of individual pupils so that their rate of learning and progress declined. The pupils work successfully in mixed groups in all lessons; girls and boys learn similarly and frequently support each other's learning. In a GCSE theory lesson, the teacher's sound subject knowledge was shared appropriately with the pupils, and time and materials were well used. However, the teacher did not probe pupils' answers sufficiently to be able to assess their understanding of the topic.

115. The day-to-day management of staffing, resources and accommodation is sound. The leadership of the subject however, is unsatisfactory. The temporary head of department has a clear vision of where the department needs to move to, but the focus on raising standards is not yet sharp enough. Linked to this, monitoring and evaluating of teaching, learning and achievement are insufficiently focused on raising standards. The assessment procedures are in place, but the results are not being used consistently to plan activities which will challenge pupils at all levels of ability. Improvement since the last inspection is therefore unsatisfactory. Pupils have good opportunities to take part in extra-curricular gymnastics and dance, sporting and team events.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The introduction of citizenship as a National Curriculum subject has been planned well.
- The quality of teaching is good overall.
- Procedures for assessing pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding across the school and the use of the information obtained are poor.
- Arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning in citizenship are poor. They are not yet included in the school's monitoring schedule.

Commentary

116. The introduction of citizenship as a National Curriculum subject has been well planned. Pupils are interested in the subject and are keen to learn. They show good attitudes to learning, resulting in good achievement. There is no discernable difference between the achievements of different groups of pupils.
117. Overall, insufficient evidence is available to judge standards at the end of Years 9 and 11. Only a limited sample of work is available and this is not currently assessed to National Curriculum attainment targets. Girls and boys are equally interested in the subject and respond well when working independently, in pairs, small groups or when asked to join in whole-class discussions.
118. Most pupils achieve well in Years 7-11. When discussing the damage caused by smoking, pupils in Year 7 show good debating skills and demonstrate tolerance and respect for each other's views. Pupils in Year 9, begin to express and justify their own observations on how different people relate together. They are confident in expressing their views, relate well to each other's experiences and understand and support the strong moral values that the school promotes. Year 10 pupils, when discussing credit and debit, can express their opinions and critically debate related issues. Year 11 pupils develop skills of responsible participation. When discussing the notion of 'vocation' pupils reflect deeply on the impact of religious beliefs and faith. The curriculum provides many opportunities, across all years, for pupils to speak, listen, research and write within a range of situations to help them become more informed citizens. Pupils become more fluent and sophisticated in how they express their opinions.
119. Teaching and learning are good overall. Lesson planning is effective with teachers highlighting citizenship learning objectives that are linked to the three statutory elements in the National Curriculum. Most teachers employ a range of methods, including pair tasks, small group work, whole-class discussions and debates and the use of external speakers. These lessons motivate and engage the majority of pupils, who show that they can consider the experiences of others, negotiate, decide and take part in challenging discussions.

120. The citizenship curriculum in Years 7-11 is well planned, with elements being covered in personal, social and health education programmes, as well as planned opportunities in other National Curriculum subjects and religious education. Schemes of work are well matched to National Curriculum requirements. In addition to the planned curriculum, there are many other opportunities where pupils can develop further their skills of enquiry and communications, can take responsible actions and improve their understanding of how informed citizens might behave. These include working as school receptionists, the work of the school council and involvement in fundraising and charity work within school and the local community.
121. Leadership and management of citizenship are satisfactory. There is a well-planned programme of work delivered through personal and social education and all subjects. However, procedures for assessing pupils' development in the knowledge, skills and understanding of citizenship, in order to gauge their attainment at the end of Years 9 and 11, are poor. Arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning in citizenship are poor. They are not yet included in the school's monitoring schedule.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4

Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3

The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	5
The effectiveness of management	4

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).