

INSPECTION REPORT

BOWER PARK SCHOOL

Romford, Essex

LEA area: Havering

Unique reference number: 102348

Headteacher: Mr P. Davies

Lead inspector: Michael McLachlan

Dates of inspection: 1st – 4th December 2003

Inspection number: 258575

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Bower Park School
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11-16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	670
School address:	Havering Road North Romford Essex
Postcode:	RM1 4YY
Telephone number:	01708 730244
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Nigel Hunt
Date of previous inspection:	21/9/1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Bower Park comprehensive school for boys and girls aged 11-16 is below average size with slightly more pupils (670) on roll since the last inspection. The school has places available in each year group and takes a significant number of pupils after the normal transfer at the beginning of Year 7, including significant numbers into the upper school and a number of pupils who have been excluded from other schools. The overall attainment on entry is well below average, particularly in skills of literacy and there are below average numbers of pupils with high ability. Most pupils come from the local community which has higher than average levels of unemployment and social disadvantage. Twenty three per cent - 152 pupils - are on the register of special educational needs, a similar proportion to most schools. An above-average number of pupils receive free school meals (26 per cent). The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds or whose first language is not English is higher than most schools and the school provides well for these pupils.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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33160	Natalia Power	Team inspector	English Special educational needs
31238	Gordon Clubb	Team inspector	Mathematics
5714	Frances Thornton	Team inspector	Science
3555	Carol Emery	Team inspector	Design and technology
4426	Terry Fitchett	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
10895	David Wasp	Team inspector	Citizenship History Religious education
2023	Ray Westwood	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
4834	Richard Frostick	Team inspector	Music
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **caring and inclusive school** that provides a **satisfactory education** for pupils and has **some good and very good features**. **Standards are satisfactory**. **Overall, teaching is satisfactory** with a **substantial proportion of good teaching** although there is a significant **minority of unsatisfactory teaching**. Leadership and management are **satisfactory**. The school gives **satisfactory** value for money.

The school's main strengths and weakness

- The school works hard to include and care for pupils of all abilities and aptitudes.
- The governors, headteacher and senior staff have a clear understanding of the needs of the school and the community and what must be done to improve standards and attitudes.
- The courses offered in Years 10 and 11 are good and provide a very good foundation for the pupils to move on to further education or work.
- Attendance, particularly in Years 8 to 10, is unsatisfactory.
- The attitudes to learning and behaviour of a minority disrupt other pupils' learning in some classes and some teachers are not always able to manage this well.
- The school has good new policies on teaching, learning and assessment but these have yet to be fully implemented and consistently applied by all staff.
- Problems with recruiting staff have disrupted the continuity of learning for some pupils and the leadership of some subjects but the school works hard to manage this situation.
- Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) and business education is unsatisfactory.
- There is good provision for the educational and leisure needs of the whole community.

Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Examination results have steadily improved particularly at the higher grades in the GCSE examinations. Weaknesses in leadership and in the curriculum for Years 10 and 11 have been addressed well. Attendance has improved, particularly in Year 11, but overall remains unsatisfactory. Information and communication technology is still unsatisfactory, as is provision for a daily act of collective worship. The governing body and senior management have resolutely remained committed to inclusion and have gained many additional resources and used them well to provide for their pupils and the community.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' ability on entry to the school measured by the national tests at the end of Year 6 is well below average. There are very few more able pupils than would normally be expected. Standards in Years 7 to 9 have been steadily rising, though not quite as fast as the national trend, and are below national averages but around the average for similar schools.

Year 11 results

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

Performance in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11, compared with average points	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
	E	D	D	D

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.

At GCSE, the overall trend is one of improvement. Results in the higher grades (A*-C) are below national averages but average when compared to similar schools. The numbers of pupils achieving five passes or at least one pass is average compared with national and similar school results. Results are also better than schools with comparable social backgrounds. The average points score for pupils is below average because there are very few pupils who achieve top grades. Overall achievement, including that of pupils with special educational needs, is satisfactory. Achievement in English and mathematics improves steadily from a very low base and by Year 11 is in line with similar schools. Science is a success story because pupils reach national averages. Standards seen

and achievement in most other subjects are satisfactory. Exceptions are in ICT and business education where standards are unsatisfactory. Pupils from ethnic minority groups and those whose first language is not English achieve well and are well integrated into school life. The school contributes well to the pupils' personal development. Attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory but are marred by a few pupils who behave immaturely in some lessons. Attendance is unsatisfactory, mainly in Years 8 to 10. There have been no permanent exclusions in the last three years.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

Overall the quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory with significant good and very good features. Teaching in nearly six out of ten lessons is good or better but there is a significant minority of teaching, particularly in Years 7 to 9, which is unsatisfactory because teachers do not provide interesting and practical activities and some pupils' behaviour is unsatisfactory. Overall, teaching in ICT and business education is unsatisfactory. The curriculum is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 but good with some very good features in Years 10 and 11 where there is a wide range of vocational and alternative accreditation courses. Provision of support, advice and guidance for students is good, as are the arrangements for care, welfare and health and safety. Most pupils take responsibility for themselves and the school has good arrangements for seeking their views. The school maintains good partnerships with parents and the community and particularly good links with local colleges to enhance the curriculum and ensure smooth transition to further education and employment.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, leadership and management are satisfactory with some good features and have the capacity to bring about the improvements needed. The leadership of the headteacher is good. The governing body are well informed, supportive yet challenging and welcome all students even though this presents the school with some pupils with challenging behaviour. They fulfil all statutory duties apart from not currently ensuring that all pupils have the opportunity for a daily act of collective worship. The senior management team has developed well since the last inspection and are now leaders in their own right. Middle management is satisfactory with some good and improving features. Overall, management in the school is satisfactory as some new, good policies have yet to be fully implemented and applied consistently across the school. Leadership of information and communication technology is poor and in business education it is unsatisfactory. The school is accredited to train new teachers and this is improving the overall quality of leadership.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils like what the school provides. They value the expectation that all should work hard and feel the school provides a safe and secure environment. They are rightly concerned about the disruption caused by a minority of pupils with unsatisfactory attitudes and behaviour and the disruption staffing difficulties causes to the quality and continuity of teaching.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- reduce the proportion of authorised and unauthorised absences and ensure, as far as possible, that parents fulfil their responsibilities in this area;
- reduce the levels of unsatisfactory teaching and behaviour management;
- ensure the recently introduced teaching, learning and assessment policies are implemented by all staff to better meet the needs of all pupils, particularly those less interested in school, and to increase the number of pupils who attain the highest grades in national examinations;
- raise standards and the quality of teaching in ICT and business education and provide more opportunities for pupils to access information and communication technology in other subjects;

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- provide all the pupils with a daily act of collective worship.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Results in national tests at the end of Year 9 were **below average** in 2002 and in 2003. Overall the trend is one of improvement but slightly below the national picture. Results in GCSE examinations were **below average** in 2002 and declined slightly in 2003. Overall, pupils' achievement is **satisfactory** because **pupils start school with well below average levels of achievement** compared with the national average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in GCSE and in the tests at the end of Year 9 have been steadily improving.
- Overall, pupils make satisfactory and sometimes good progress given that their standards are well below average when they start school.
- GCSE results in Year 11 are better than schools with similar free school meals and satisfactory when compared to achievements at the end of Year 9.
- Standards are poor in information and communication technology and unsatisfactory in business education.
- Achievement in science is good. From a low starting point, achievement in science reaches national averages by Year 11.

Commentary

1. Pupils' ability on entry to the school measured by the national tests at the end of Year 6 is well below average. There are very few more able pupils.

Key Stage 3 –Years 7 to 9

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 9 – average point scores in 2002

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.9 (30.4)	33.3
Mathematics	31.7 (30.6)	34.7
Science	30.8 (31.6)	33.3

There were 152 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. Results in national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were below average. Results in 2003 were similar. Results in 2003 were slightly below average compared with similar schools. Overall this represents good progress by this group of pupils given their attainment on entry to the school. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 are working at below average standards but their overall achievement over time is satisfactory. This is because teaching is now better planned and more directed to the needs of the students as the school has adopted the techniques of the Key Stage 3 National Strategies to improve teaching and learning. There is now more good teaching than previously seen in the last inspection.
3. Starting from well below average standards overall on entry to the school, pupils' standards of work seen in Years 7 to 9 were average in English, mathematics and physical education. Although improving, standards remained below average in all other subjects apart from information and communication technology where standards were very low. Pupils achieve well during their first three years in school in art and geography. Their achievement is satisfactory in all other subjects except information and communication technology, where progress is slow because of poor planning and teaching.

Key Stage 4 Years 10 and 11

Standards in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11 in 2002

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	39 (32)	50
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	88 (92)	91
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	97 (96)	96
Average point score per pupil	33.1 (29.5)	39.8

There were 120 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 in GCSE at five A*-C grades have been steadily improving following a dip after the last inspection. While below all schools nationally the school's results are better than schools with similar numbers of pupils entitled to free school meals and represent satisfactory progress compared to pupils with similar scores in the Year 9 tests. The numbers of pupils achieving five or more and at least one GCSE is in line with the national picture, better than schools with similar free school meals and in line with national averages given their results in the national tests in Year 9. The school's aims are to include and reach all pupils and these results are an indication of the considerable success they have in this respect. However, there are very few pupils achieving the highest grades and this reduces the average point scores for pupils and so places the school below similar schools in this measure. This is not surprising given the low number of high attaining pupils starting at the school; nevertheless, the school need to improve this situation.
- Standards seen in the inspection were average in English, mathematics and science, showing an improvement over that achieved in the 2003 examinations. In all other subjects they remain below average apart from information and communication technology where they are poor. Achievement shows pupils are progressing well in science, geography and art and satisfactorily in most other subjects apart from information and communication technology and business education where unsatisfactory teaching and planning are leading to low achievement in lessons. Standards achieved in the GCSE 'short courses' in information and communication technology, religious education and physical education are below average and the school is rightly reviewing the nature and content of these courses.
- The school's results in some subjects go against the national trend in that boys achieve better than girls, largely because boys' attendance is better than girls' in Years 10 and 11 and the girls are sometimes less well motivated to achieve. Pupils from minority ethnic groups are well integrated into the school and consequently achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Pupils who have English as an additional language make very good progress in their acquisition of English, with the support of the specialist teacher and teachers within the school. They very quickly become confident in speaking and within a short time they match their peers in their understanding and use of written language. Standards are at least in line with pupils of similar ability and often better. Achievement in national examinations is in line with expectations given their ability and many achieve very well and make good progress. The pupils with special educational needs are well supported, particularly by the teaching assistants and achieve at least satisfactorily and sometimes well given their prior achievements. Parents of these pupils expressed particular satisfaction in the way the school supported their children and went out of their way to enable them to achieve to the best of their ability.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships are **satisfactory**. Attendance is **unsatisfactory** and punctuality is **satisfactory**. Arrangements for promoting students' personal qualities are **satisfactory** and spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attendance is unsatisfactory.
 - Pupils respond well to the good pastoral support and the teaching that is stimulating.
 - There is unsatisfactory behaviour in some lessons, particularly in the lower school and especially where teachers do not manage it effectively.
 - Most pupils behave in a calm and orderly way.
 - Pupils like their school and welcome visitors courteously.
 - There have been no permanent exclusions from the school for the last three years.
7. In 2001-02 attendance was unsatisfactory. It was lower than in the previous year and lower than at the time of the previous inspection. Attendance is lower in Years 8, 9 and 10. In Years 7 and 11, pupils' enthusiasm and interest are better engaged by the curriculum and teaching they receive. The school works hard to improve attendance but some parents are too ready to condone absence in term time. The attendance officer makes very good use of the new computerised system to enable staff to identify pupils who need help. The home school support worker encourages families to work with the school. The education welfare officer gives the school good support. Most of these initiatives have recently been introduced and their effect has not yet fed through to improving the attendance figures. Most pupils arrive punctually in the mornings. A few pupils are late consistently and are also late to lessons and afternoon registration. The school has wisely decided to invest in lesson-by-lesson monitoring to further support their efforts to improve attendance.
8. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. The school has strengthened the spiritual side by working more closely with a local church. A true moment of awe and wonder came when the headteacher opened the first day of the advent calendar in assembly. The whole of Years 7, 8 and 9 gasped 'Ah' in unison. The school has sustained the moral and social strength noted in the previous report. Pupils respond well to the lessons on citizenship and 'life skills'. Cultural provision is sound. The school has good procedures against racial harassment. Pupils from different heritages work together well.
9. Most pupils behave in an orderly way around the school. They are courteous to visitors. They participate with interest where teaching is good. This happens especially in lessons where they see practical value for their skills and futures. In contrast, a minority of pupils show disaffection. This happens mostly in the lower school and mainly, but not exclusively, where teaching and behaviour management are weak. The school has high expectations of good behaviour. Last year, it made 170 fixed-period exclusions, more than in the previous report and the school now excludes a higher proportion of girls. Pupils respond positively to this short, sharp shock. However, in line with its aims to cater for the needs of all pupils, it has not excluded any pupil permanently for the last three years.
10. Pupils with English as an additional language have positive attitudes to the school and to learning. They are very involved in school life and join in the activities that the school offers. They are confident and have made many friends in the school. The culture of pupils with English as an additional language is well respected by other pupils, who show great interest in the different traditions.

Exclusions

The number of fixed term exclusions involved 81 pupils in total.

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	582	157	0
White – Irish	4	6	0
White – any other White background	17	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	7	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	9	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	9	0	0
Black or Black British – African	8	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	2	5	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	5	2	0
No ethnic group recorded	17	0	0

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

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	8.6	School data:	1.8
National data:	7.8	National data:	1.2

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Overall the quality of education is **satisfactory with good features**. Teaching and learning are **satisfactory**. The curriculum is **satisfactory** in the lower school and **good with some very good features** in Years 10 and 11 where recently introduced curriculum changes have improved attendance, motivation and staying-on rates to further education. Care and guidance and partnership with parents and other providers are also **good with some very good features**.

Teaching and learning

Teaching, learning and assessment are **satisfactory** overall, with many examples of **good and better** practice. Good teaching has improved since the last inspection but there is still a significant minority of unsatisfactory teaching.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are examples of excellent, very good and good practice across the school, most notably within the departments of physical education and history and the extended curriculum provision for Years 10 and 11 students.
- The courses run in Years 10 and 11, which are based on a partnership between the school and the local college, provide the pupils with good or better teaching at both venues.
- Teaching in too many lessons, particularly in Years 7 to 9, is unsatisfactory because teachers do not provide interesting and practical activities and some pupils have unsatisfactory attitudes to learning.
- The overall effectiveness of the teaching in the school is reduced by difficulties encountered in the recruitment of staff which result in an over-reliance on unqualified teachers and those on short-term contracts.
- The quality of teaching in business education and information and communication technology is unsatisfactory.
- The introduction of the Key Stage 3 National Strategy for improving teaching and learning and the involvement in initial teacher training is having a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning across the school.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 103 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1 (1%)	18 (17%)	40(39%)	30 (29%)	13 (12%)	3 (2%)	0 (0%)

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

11. Overall teaching in the school is satisfactory as evidenced by lessons observed and by scrutinising the work pupils produced during and before the inspection. There was good and very good teaching in nearly six out of ten lessons observed, an improvement since the last inspection. This good teaching is seen across the majority of subjects and leads to satisfactory learning overall. Nearly half of the unsatisfactory teaching seen was given by teachers who when observed later taught satisfactory or better lessons. Of the remaining unsatisfactory lessons the majority were in the subject areas of information and communication technology and business education, where teaching is unsatisfactory overall, or in areas where staffing shortages had led to the discontinuity of teaching.
12. The school is well aware of these deficiencies and is taking robust action to remedy them. Good additional monitoring and support by senior management are targeted at information and communication technology and business education. The school has worked hard to recruit new staff to posts of responsibility and continue to do so though not always with success. The school has worked well with the local education authority to create a teaching and learning policy which focused on raising standards in all subject areas and promoting consistently good practice throughout the school. The school is also a lead player in an approved consortium designated to award qualified teacher status. The consortium provides good quality training and the school successfully uses this as a strategy to 'grow their own' quality teachers and improve the quality of teaching of their own staff.
13. There are examples of good and very good teaching in most subjects. For example, good quality teaching in history is typified by the wide variety of techniques used within the

classroom, including presentations and role play. In physical education the lessons are well planned and delivered with enthusiasm by the teachers. Good teaching is characterised by enthusiasm combined with challenging, practical tasks and the excellent use of time which serves to motivate pupils so they achieve well. In some subjects, most noticeably English, mathematics, science, history and modern foreign languages, teachers make good use of the Key Stage 3 National Strategy which is designed to raise standards through improving teaching. Pupils with English as an additional language are very well supported by a specialist teacher, who focuses on the various areas of learning of these pupils. They are also very well supported in the school, as all staff have received training on the needs of these pupils and the strategies that can be used to assist them.

14. Unsatisfactory teaching is characterised by teachers providing lessons which are not sufficiently interesting or practically based. In these lessons the teachers do not plan the work carefully enough in order to reach pupils who are, in the main, more comfortable learning through working and thinking in practical contexts rather than learning through abstract and theoretically based lessons. In these lessons, the less academic pupils lose interest and in some cases their unsatisfactory attitudes to learning leads to low level disruptive behaviour which prevents other pupils from learning.
15. The school works very well with the local tertiary college in order to widen the range of courses available to pupils in Years 10 and 11. The quality of teaching in this partnership arrangement is good and sometimes very good. The courses and the manner in which they are delivered encourage and engage the pupils with the use of interesting teaching material and a variety of strategies for its delivery. The pupil-teacher relationships are very good.
16. Assessment is satisfactory overall. It is being developed across the school and used well to assist Year 11 students in setting targets for GCSE performance and identifying those who need additional tuition or mentoring support. The school assesses the needs of pupils with English as an additional language well in order to place them in groups that match their ability and learning needs, effectively monitoring their progress at regular intervals. The use of performance data to inform teaching and learning in lessons is developing and as yet the practice is inconsistent. Generally, marking is satisfactory and sometimes good. There is very good practice in English, where marking is meticulous so that pupils know how to improve. Assessment is unsatisfactory in business studies and information and communication technology.

The curriculum

The curriculum provision is **good** in Years 10 and 11, **satisfactory** in Years 7 to 9 and **satisfactory overall**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is good with a wide range of non-academic, GCSE and vocational courses delivered on site and in partnership with other providers.
- The curriculum makes good provision for acknowledging the achievement of pupils with special educational needs.
- There is a good range of extra-curricular experiences on offer. The curriculum is strengthened through partnerships with external providers including local further education colleges and Ford's Centre of Engineering excellence.
- The proportion of pupils studying a foreign language in the current Year 10 is low.
- The overall quality of the curriculum for information and communication technology is poor.
- The arrangements for collective acts of worship do not meet statutory requirements.

Commentary

17. In response to criticisms in the last report the governors and teachers have developed a curriculum in Years 10 and 11 that is well planned and motivating. There are innovative and

exciting links with local colleges and industrial providers which have led to an increase in the number of pupils moving on to full time education or training post-16. An appropriate range of courses is offered to pupils in Years 7 to 9, but there are too few opportunities for pupils to access and use information and communication technology outside that specific subject area. The information and communication technology curriculum is too compartmentalised and does not provide pupils with an appropriate first-hand context for their learning.

18. The learning of pupils with special educational needs is supported well through the school's planning based on their individual needs, the deployment of learning assistants and the policy of creating teaching groups of pupils with similar levels of ability whenever possible. All pupils have full access to the curriculum and pupils who speak English as an additional language receive very good support. Pupils benefit from a good range of extra-curricular activities, many of which stem from lesson time activities in physical education and music. As part of the school's inclusive ethos governors bear the cost of instrumental tuition for all pupils who wish to take part.
19. The school has sufficient staff to meet the demands of the curriculum and pupils' learning, though with significant reliance on agency staff or non-UK-qualified staff who are generally on short term contracts. Although the quality of teaching provided by this group of teachers is overall satisfactory and sometimes good, some lessons seen were unsatisfactory because the teachers had not yet been able to develop the relationships over time needed to manage the behaviour of some pupils. Overall the school's accommodation and resources are satisfactory and are well managed to match the needs of the curriculum. The learning resources centre is a strength to the school. It is large, well-stocked and very well managed. The premises are generous in their extent, although the fabric in some areas is in need of repair in order to provide a more motivating and stimulating environment. Specialist rooms such as laboratories, workshops and information and communication technology rooms are adequate in number and are well equipped.

Care, guidance and support

Bower Park **cares well** for its pupils. It provides **good** personal guidance. It prepares them **very well** for life after school. It keeps **well** in touch with their opinions.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school gives pupils good guidance and support in their personal development.
- It cares well for their health, safety and well being.
- The school consults pupils well and acts on what they say.
- It helps them very well when they join the school and gives them very good guidance for their careers and further study.

Commentary

20. Bower Park is a caring school. It provides good care for pupils' health, safety and well being. Health and safety is a high priority and governors join senior staff in carrying out regular risk assessments and get good support from skilled caretaking staff. The previous report commented adversely on pupils' toilets and despite refurbishment they are still in need of improvement. Arrangements for managing child protection are good. Staff and pupils value the school's commitment to include all pupils. Procedures for building pupils' personal development are strong. Staff know their pupils well. Pupils know that adults will listen if they have a problem. Overall the school makes good use of its assertive discipline¹ and anti-bullying policies. Non-academic pupils in Year 11 welcome the vocational improvement programme which enables them to focus well on the practical side of learning.

¹ Assertive discipline has three main parts: clear unambiguous rules; continuous positive feedback to pupils when they successfully keep to these rules; and a consistent, recognised hierarchy of sanctions if a pupil breaks the rules.

21. The Inclusion Zone is a dedicated building with well equipped classrooms within the school which takes pupils who are having difficulties in coping or behaving well in the main school. This is an excellent and highly effective resource that effectively promotes social inclusion and equips pupils with the learning and social skills necessary to achieve success in mainstream education. A rigorous referral system ensures that pupils are provided with well matched short term programmes. There is a very caring and purposeful environment and a variety of activities are provided for pupils so that teaching and learning are very good and they can quickly return to their mainstream classes. This re-integration is monitored very efficiently to ensure success. The zone is led and managed very well and provides a highly structured learning environment for pupils.
22. The school has very good arrangements for pupils moving from one phase of education to the next. It takes care to place pupils joining at the start of Year 7 into tutor groups where they can work well. Several parents at the pre-inspection meeting say their children have settled in happily. Care is taken to ensure that pupils who join the school who have English as an additional language are quickly integrated into the school. Teachers ensure that they are well looked after, so that they feel confident in a new situation and these pupils are well supported throughout their time in the school. The school provides very good arrangements to help pupils move on to work or further education with strong links with local colleges so that staying on rates are good. Bower Park gives very effective help to pupils starting their working career immediately. In co-operation with several local agencies, it arranges courses in life skills and at various local industries. Pupils get an extra week of work experience and they value it greatly.
23. The school makes good efforts to involve pupils and a recent questionnaire shows that 93 per cent think Bower Park is a good school to be at. There is a very effective school council. All five year groups have a council, with a boy and a girl from each tutor group and representatives from each year form the school council. This group take their responsibilities very seriously and work very well on behalf of all other pupils. For example, a garden area in the school grounds is a direct result of the school council's mature and determined efforts.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Good links with parents and the community have a positive effect on pupils' learning. There are **very good** links with other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has very good links with other schools and colleges.
- Good links with the community enhance pupils' learning and leisure.
- The school provides good information for parents and actively seeks and values their views.

Commentary

24. The school has very good links with other local schools. It makes good use of the academic and personal information that the primary schools provide and information gathered through visits by senior staff. Induction arrangements are good and valued by parents and pupils. These arrangements are supported well by other initiatives, including sports staff providing expert coaching for six local primary schools. Older pupils are well supported through an engineering project with two other secondary schools which has achieved a significant extension of the computer aided design and manufacturing (CAD/CAM) technology at all three schools, two local colleges guarantee places for Bower Park students.
25. Good links with the community provide wide-ranging benefits to pupils' learning and personal development. Music is a big part of many pupils' lives. The orchestra plays for primary schools, the local hospital and at the theatre in Romford. Pupils sing carols for senior citizens. The orchestra, choir and jazz club will perform on a musical tour to Bruges next summer. Pupils are very keen on sport. They are members of school teams and local clubs in usual

sports such as soccer, netball and athletics. The girls' soccer team is doing well. In addition, one girl is an Essex county champion in archery and another came second in her age group. These activities positively affect pupils' self-confidence and commitment to the school.

26. The school values parents' contributions and has good links with them. Most parents think well of the school. Parents of pupils who speak English as an additional language are well supported; for example, there are good facilities to provide translators when necessary. Parents responded positively to all questions on the pre- inspection questionnaire. They were particularly satisfied with the high expectations of hard work and the way the school helps their children settle in. However, they were rightly concerned, as were pupils, about some behaviour which they feel disturbs the learning in lessons and this was evident in a minority of lessons seen. Parents also showed concern about the information they receive about their children's progress; however, overall the annual reports cover pupils' progress well and the school effectively arranges meetings for parents with form tutors and subject teachers. The school is aware that some parents find it difficult to participate in their children's education and works hard to include all its families. For example, the school has recently appointed a home-school support worker who is already building up good relationships with parents who find it hard to work with the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, leadership and management are **satisfactory** with some **good features**. The work of the governing body is **good**. There is no daily act of collective worship so this aspect of their work is deemed unsatisfactory. Overall, middle management is **satisfactory** and financial management is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The governors, headteacher and senior staff have a clear understanding of the needs of the school and the community and what must be done to improve standards and attitudes.
- The headteacher provides good leadership ensuring that the aims of the school to include and support all pupils to achieve are paramount and is well supported by the deputy headteacher and the extended senior management team.
- Governors are good and make a very valuable contribution to the work of the school. The provision of a daily act of collective worship for all pupils is not met so this aspect of their work is unsatisfactory.
- The school is developing effective monitoring procedures but these are not applied rigorously enough at all levels resulting in some inconsistent implementation of new key policies on teaching, learning and assessment and behaviour management.
- The school's development planning identifies clear and appropriate priorities that are reflected well in the department plans. However, there is insufficient detail about specific actions to measure their success in raising attainment and attitudes to learning.
- Financial management is very good. The acquisition of additional funding has a positive impact enabling the school to promote its philosophy of inclusion.

Commentary

27. Overall, leadership and management are satisfactory because, although there are some good features, a number of key improvement strategies have only recently been introduced and have yet to impact fully on raising standards, improving the quality of some teaching and improving the behaviour and attitudes of some pupils. The headteacher's philosophy of 'the inclusive school' permeates all aspects of school life. His commitment is shared by the governors, staff and pupils and is understood and valued by parents. Important policies, initiatives and procedures have recently been developed to ensure that a better range of opportunities exist to help all pupils in the school to succeed. The governing body is actively involved with many aspects of the school. It is committed, well informed and has a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and the barriers that exist that hinder improvements. The supportive and challenging relationship between the headteacher

and the governing body creates positive and productive leadership for the school. The governing body fulfils all statutory duties with the exception of providing all pupils with a daily act of collective worship.

28. The deputy head and the extended management team carry out their roles and responsibilities well providing good support to the headteacher and staff at all levels. This is good improvement since the last inspection where leadership at this level was judged a weakness. This team has recently worked well with the local authority advisory service to develop and hone their skills observing and evaluating the quality of teaching in the school and now has the capacity to bring about the further improvements needed. Overall, departments are satisfactorily led and managed with some notably good leaders in drama, mathematics, geography and citizenship. Leadership and management are poor in information and communication technology and unsatisfactory in business education. While history is well managed by the most experienced teacher in the department, there is currently no head of department in place so leadership is presently unsatisfactory.
29. Overall, management is satisfactory with some good features. The quality of planning to achieve the vision for the school is good with appropriate priorities identified and reflected well in planning at different levels in the school, although some plans lack sufficient specific information about actions to be taken and the outcomes expected to indicate success in raising standards. The monitoring of performance using data is effectively done at senior management level but its use by heads of department is variable, as is the detailed use of assessment information to help pupils improve their work in lessons. Teaching, learning and assessment policies have been updated well in the light of developments in national strategies in these areas. The school is developing effective monitoring and self-evaluation strategies and procedures but they are not yet rigorously applied at all levels to eliminate inconsistencies that exist in the implementation of these policies.
30. The school has a good system for staff development and performance management. It is facing difficulties in recruiting qualified staff but works energetically to find replacements. The governors have taken the decision to appoint additional staff to meet the aims and ethos of the school. These colleagues make a valuable contribution to the life of the school. Staff are involved in a number of good professional development initiatives including 'Leading from the Middle', a course designed to improve leadership skills of existing and potential heads of departments.
31. Financial management is very good. The school has worked hard to attract additional funding for the school and the community and so manages a variety of funds over and above the basic school budget. These are used effectively to add value to the educational experiences of the pupils and provide a much needed facility for the community. Over half of the balance carried forward was held back to pay for significant and much needed refurbishments to the school building, heating and security systems. The remaining balance falls within an acceptable level for contingency funding.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	2,677,762	Balance from previous year	200,930
Total expenditure	2,661,729	Balance carried forward to the next	216,963
Expenditure per pupil	3,973		

COMMUNITY

Good enterprise by the school provides a wide range of well used community facilities.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The senior managers and governors work hard to ensure their inclusive ethos extends beyond the main school in order to meet the needs of the other young people and the local community.
- The school offers good activities for the community's life and learning.
- The school uses its additional accommodation well to provide facilities for innovative activities to support the needs of disadvantaged groups in the community.

Commentary

32. The school plays an important part in the local community as the area has few other leisure and learning facilities. The community makes full use of the school's buildings and grounds. Bower Park accommodates the largest on-site youth club in Havering. It has an adult education college on site. A football club trains and plays on the sports field, hiring the school hall for its discotheques. Marching bands based at the school have a nationwide reputation. The site uniquely provides equipment and rehearsal facilities for aspiring groups and bands. Pupils join in all these activities, continuing long after they have left the school. An over 50s club meets each week.
33. The school hosts two significant and creative organisations which provide support for adults and pupils with learning difficulties. There are excellent links forged through the school, Education Business partnership, industrial and commercial sponsors and the special schools which have resulted in pupils with learning difficulties from local schools and Bower Park gaining work-place experience on the school premises. Here the school effectively operates as a sub-contractor with various local companies and students gaining first hand experience of meeting production deadlines, ensuring quality control and regular time keeping. The other facility gives adults opportunity to carry out therapeutic work in a well resourced and supportive environment.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision for English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils arrive at the school with well below-average results and make good progress over time.
- The head of department provides good leadership.
- Teachers work well together with a common purpose.
- Pupils' work is thoroughly marked, with attention paid to national curriculum levels and to self-assessment by pupils.
- Information and communication technology is not used enough.

Commentary

34. Pupils enter Year 7 with attainment that is well below national standards and make good progress, achieving well by the time they leave school. English results in national tests at the end of Year 9 are below average overall, but there has been a recent improvement. While boys' results are in line, girls' results lag behind girls' results nationally. Results in the examinations at the end of Year 9 are in line with those in similar schools and are broadly in line with other subjects in the school. The number of pupils reaching the expected level is broadly in line with the national average, though few pupils achieve the highest grades because there is no specific programme of support for able pupils.
35. In the GCSE examinations, results are a little below the national average. Results in English are higher than in many other subjects within the school and are improving. The majority of pupils gain higher results than pupils' attainment at entry would indicate. As in the first three years, pupils are taught in sets, but in Year 10 there is a specific course for the most able which helps these pupils make good progress. Overall, pupils achieve well in lessons and good progress is made over time. However, girls' achievement in examinations is below that of girls nationally due in the main to the lack of aspiration and interest by some girls and insufficient focus given to this issue by the department.
36. Teaching is satisfactory with good features. Some teaching is very good. Pupils learn well because lessons are well-planned and the objectives are clear. However, pupils' behaviour is sometimes challenging. This reduces the learning taking place in cases where teachers attempt to deal with the challenging behaviour by persisting with disciplinary methods, rather than by making the tasks more accessible and varied. All pupils who have English as an additional language make very good progress in their acquisition of English, with the support of the specialist teacher and teachers within the school. They very quickly become confident in speaking and within a short time they match their peers in their understanding and use of written language. Less able pupils and those with special educational needs, especially those in the lowest-ability set, are helped to learn effectively by efficient learning support assistants who are familiar with the work of the English department. There is a good emphasis on reading. Pupils' reading skills are improved through regular library lessons in which they are actively encouraged to read and gain enjoyment from reading.
37. Teachers use assessment very well to promote improvement. Marking guidelines in the assessed work are directly related to national curriculum levels. This enables pupils and parents to assess pupils' progress over time. There is a welcome emphasis on self-assessment. Teachers provide targets for improvement. Pupils' skills in self-assessment are well developed because they are encouraged to comment on their own work and identify

areas for improvement. Overall the curriculum is good, but information and communication technology is not used sufficiently within the classroom or for homework to improve pupils' writing or for research purposes. A minority of pupils have poor attendance, across all years and ability groups and this reduces their learning and overall attainment.

38. Leadership of the department is good ensuring that the team work together with a common purpose to raise standards. The head of department is consolidating the department after staffing difficulties in the recent past. He has a clear vision of the future development of the department. Management of the department is satisfactory with good features. Staff development is good because teachers are encouraged to attend courses and new teachers are offered good support through successful mentoring. The improvement in boys' results since the last inspection shows the effectiveness of carefully targeted strategies. Improving girls' performance is now the most important area for improvement. Overall there has been satisfactory progress since the last inspection.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

39. Provision is good. Standards of literacy across the school are satisfactory compared with similar schools. Pupils start school with well below average standards and less able pupils particularly have difficulty in expressing themselves or writing at length. In response to this the school has adopted an effective whole-school policy on literacy, which is beginning to raise standards. The responsibility for co-ordinating language and literacy across the curriculum is shared between the head of learning support and the head of English. They give up their own time to ensure that a good programme of support and guidance is in place, enabling all subjects to place a strong emphasis on improving written and spoken English. All teachers have been given some training in improving pupils' literacy skills. There is evidence across all of the subjects that pupils are taught important key words and are encouraged to write and speak clearly and correctly in order to meet the specific requirements of each subject. Good practice is particularly evident in drama, mathematics, modern foreign languages, art and history.

Modern foreign languages

The overall provision for modern foreign languages is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is satisfactory overall with some good features.
- Marking and assessment of pupils' work are detailed and helpful and there are good and comprehensive schemes of work.
- Standards are below average overall, particularly in French in Years 8 and 9 and in German in Year 11.
- Pupils have limited skills and confidence in speaking in the foreign languages.
- There is poor take-up by pupils of languages in Years 10 and 11.

Commentary

40. Standards in French by the end of Year 9 are below average. This is to be expected given the low literacy levels of pupils on entry. Able pupils can extract meaning from recorded text, pronounce well and write with accuracy and their standards are close to average. However, many pupils lack speaking confidence and a substantial minority do not make enough effort to avoid anglicised speech. Overall, results in French at GCSE are below the national average at grades A*-C and in German are well below average because of the lack of recent specialist teaching. There is no difference in the performance of boys and girls. Listening skills are, however, satisfactory when pupils work with clearly structured text and questioning but spoken language is limited by pupils' reliance on prompts. Standards seen during the inspection reflect these results. Pupils' achievement overall, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, is just satisfactory because they

listen well for meaning and are beginning to focus on good pronunciation and on accurate use of grammar. Beginners in Year 7 are already making good progress and their achievement is commendable at this early stage. Where there is some underachievement in French in Years 8 and 9 and in German in Year 11 it is linked to pupils' low self-confidence to speak without support and to apply previously learned material in new contexts.

41. The quality of teaching is satisfactory across both key stages but is inconsistent in Years 8 and 9 where there are both good and unsatisfactory features. In the best lessons teachers maintain a brisk pace, clarify lesson objectives, present material effectively, use the foreign language appropriately for classroom instruction and plan a range of active tasks. This has a positive impact on learning because pupils are usually attentive, enjoy involvement in practical tasks and are beginning to use the language to seek help. Teachers use lesson time well and marking and assessment are detailed and helpful. However, teaching is occasionally mundane and when unsatisfactory presentation lacks impact it is because methods are not sufficiently flexible or imaginative to adapt to the needs of all pupils. In these cases pupils make little effort to go beyond the narrow confines of the task and lack commitment to their work.
42. The management and leadership of the department are satisfactory. The newly-appointed head of department has developed good schemes of work, very helpful supportive documentation and is beginning to improve monitoring of standards through analysis of data and the increase in the use of information and communication technology. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership and management of the department are good.
- The pupils are reluctant to commit themselves fully to working in lessons.
- Teacher-pupil relationships are good.
- Teachers have low levels of expectation about pupils' achievement.
- The department act as a team, resulting in consistency of routine and the exchange of good practice.

Commentary

43. Pupils enter the school with levels of achievement well below those expected nationally. At the end of Year 9 standards are below average when compared to national levels and at the end of Year 11 the number of pupils achieving A*-C grades in the GCSE examinations is below the national average. Standards in lessons are in line with the expected levels in similar schools. Pupils' achievement in lessons is satisfactory, although it varies across the year groups from good to unsatisfactory. This wide variation in achievement is linked to the quality of teaching and pupils' attitudes to learning. Pupils with special educational needs and with English as an additional language achieve well as, overall, lessons are well planned to meet their needs.
44. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. There are some examples of very good practice and to a minor extent some of unsatisfactory practice. Where the teaching is very good the use of open-ended questioning enthuses the pupils and results in pupils enjoying the subject and the learning they experience. In these instances the work is carefully planned to take account of prior knowledge and to stretch the pupils' mathematics. Unsatisfactory aspects of teaching include low expectations of the pupils with regard to either the level or quantity of work. This lack of challenge results in inattention and low level disruption on the part of the pupils. The quality of marking is equally varied. Where it is good the marking is informative, advising the pupils how to improve on the standard of their work. On occasions the marking is cursory and sparse.

45. The mathematics department is inviting and attractive and there are interesting and informative displays of pupils' work. This is further enhanced by the good teacher-pupil relationships which greatly enhance the pupils' learning and achievement. These relationships are based on the teachers' secure knowledge of the subject and their personal qualities of openness and honesty which lead in lessons to pupils being generally co-operative and compliant. Pupils attempt the work set and are pleasant and polite. However, pupils are easily satisfied and do not always look to extend the work or fully commit themselves to working as hard as they can in every lesson. When these attitudes are coupled with teachers sometimes having low expectations, some pupils coast and fail to attain the higher grades. Although the department has satisfactory systems of setting individual targets for pupils this process is very much in its infancy and has less impact on standards when the targets set relate to simple routines rather than academic achievement.
46. The leadership and management of the mathematics department are good and the subject leader has established a cohesive team which is consistent in its practice. For example, the department has wholeheartedly adopted the national strategy in mathematics so that lessons follow a similar format and objectives and vocabulary new to the pupils are clearly identified at the start of the session. Such consistency results in the pupils feeling secure, aware of how the lesson is going to develop and of their part in the process. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

Mathematics across the curriculum

47. Overall, pupils' standards in mathematics are satisfactory and the provision for mathematics across the curriculum is also satisfactory. Pupils speak confidently and positively about their mathematical experiences within the school. Staff development sessions have been held on how teachers can promote mathematics across the curriculum and there are examples of departments using numeracy and reinforcing its importance. For example, in science and geography pupils use graphs on a regular basis and in design and technology pupils understand the importance of accuracy as they develop their scale drawings.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main Strengths and weaknesses

- In Years 10 and 11, achievement in science is good.
- Pupils perform better in GCSE and GNVQ examinations science than in other subjects.
- The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is good and meets the needs of the pupils.
- Assessment is good in Years 10 to 11.
- There is unsatisfactory provision of information and communication technology for many pupils.

Commentary

48. Overall, pupils make good progress in science and by the age of 16 their achievement is good, including pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs. In 2002, overall standards at GCSE were in line with the national average, which represents very good progress from the end of Year 9. In 2003, results in science dipped, but pupils continued to do well in comparison to their performance in other subjects. The science department has successfully developed and assessed a modular curriculum and introduced GNVQ science, which suits the pupils' learning styles, although boys perform better than girls. When they enter the school, pupils' standards are well below average. Since the last inspection, standards in national tests at the end of Year 9 have improved because of improvements in curriculum planning and assessment. Standards remain below the national figure, but in line with similar schools. Pupils' achievement from Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory. Currently, some pupils do not achieve as much as they should due to some unsatisfactory teaching and lack of continuity in learning through absence. In Years 10 and 11, pupils in the

school continue to achieve well where there has been continuity in teaching. Overall, pupils with special educational needs achieve well especially as teaching assistants are effectively deployed to support these pupils. Achievement in some groups has been interrupted by problems in recruitment of staff. The progress of a few pupils is reduced by their absences and unsatisfactory attitudes to learning.

49. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and good in some lessons. Teaching was better in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 7 to 9 where there was one unsatisfactory lesson. Most teachers use a good range of methods to keep pupils interested and to help understanding of difficult scientific concepts. Where the learning was good, the teacher used practical and imaginative methods such as demonstrations of the reactions of alkaline metals with water to capture the pupils' imagination. Pupils were interested, behaved well and were willing to work hard to learn about difficult ideas. All teachers use homework to reinforce and extend pupils' learning in class. Teachers make it clear to pupils what they want them to learn and so pupils know what is expected of them. Most teachers stress the use and meaning of correct scientific language, which helps pupils to learn key ideas. Learning and achievement are unsatisfactory when teaching is dull because the methods chosen are not as practical, imaginative and interesting. Consequently, pupils quickly become bored and start to misbehave and more time is spent in lessons on managing behaviour than helping pupils to learn.
50. Assessment is satisfactory overall. In Years 10 and 11 it is good. Teachers track achievement through regular tests and each teacher records pupils' progress. Pupils have just started to record their grades against target grades. Most marking is regular and supportive and helps pupils to improve. Pupils have a clear view of what they should do to improve but do not always respond to teachers' helpful comments. In particular in Year 7 some pupils' achievement was limited by absence and unfinished work which was not followed up.
51. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The head of department has been in post for less than a term. She has identified key areas for improvement and is committed to raising standards, particularly of girls. She has started to monitor the performance of individual pupils and marking. There has been insufficient time to ensure full consistency of implementation of planning and marking. There is good provision of information and communication technology in GNVQ science, but too few opportunities for other pupils. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Examination results at GCSE have been poor in recent years.
- There is underachievement evident in many lessons, often due to work which is poorly planned and lacking in challenge.
- The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory and sometimes poor.
- Planning and delivery of the curriculum are unsatisfactory.
- The management of information and communication technology is poor. This is most evident in relation to curriculum planning and use of resources.
- There is some good practice in the teaching of information and communication technology which has the potential to be shared more widely.
- Good use is made of information and communication technology resources in the teaching of physical education.

Commentary

52. In 2002 36 per cent of pupils entered gained a grade at A*-C level and their results in information and communication technology were, on average, more than one whole grade below what they gained in other subjects. Results for 2003, though still provisional at the time of writing, conform to a similar pattern. Results at GCSE have been poor for a number of

years and standards in lessons at Key Stage 4 are well below average and show little sign of any improvement. Pupils' coursework folders are underdeveloped, containing a limited range of work and technical writing at a very shallow level.

53. At Key Stage 3 standards are similarly unsatisfactory. In 2003 less than half the pupils in Years 7 to 9 were assessed as attaining at or above the nationally expected level. This is the result of unsatisfactory teaching and the strategy of teaching the whole of the curriculum through one core lesson per week which has resulted in superficial work in some key areas. Topics such as data logging and numerical control are taught without adequate context so that overall achievement is unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching, though it has some good features which could be built upon, is unsatisfactory overall. Lesson planning too often engages pupils with the subject at a superficial level beyond which they do not progress. Teacher assessment is unsatisfactorily managed and analysed.
54. Leadership and management in information and communication technology are poor. Resources are not well utilised and curriculum planning is shallow in depth and narrow in scope. The governors and senior management are currently taking robust action to improve this position. However, the most important failings identified in this inspection were cited in the last inspection report and were relatively long-standing at that time. There has been little progress in relation to improving standards of work, the quality of teaching or curriculum planning, so that improvement since the last inspection is poor.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

55. Pupils' standards in information and communication technology are poor. The use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning in other subject areas is very restricted with good practice in this respect evident only in the teaching of physical education. Information and communication technology rooms are largely used for specific information and communication technology lessons with booking records showing little use by other subjects. There is a five station network in the learning resource area but internet access from this network has proved problematic and licensing difficulties have precluded the use of the school's library of CD-ROM's; additionally many pupils have complained, with some justification, about the difficulty of getting their work printed. The school is currently not getting good value for money in terms of its investment in information and communication technology resources. Pupils are missing out on important learning experiences across the curriculum.

HUMANITIES

Geography

The quality of provision is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching results in good achievement by pupils.
- Textbooks are not provided for pupils in all years, which makes it difficult for pupils to extend and consolidate their learning
- There are unsatisfactory aspects of assessment in Years 7 to 9.
- Fieldwork is an integral part of the subject, which provides pupils with a first hand experience of the subject.
- Relationships are good, which motivates pupils to succeed.
- There is insufficient use of information and communication technology.

Commentary

56. Results in the GCSE examinations in 2002 were below national averages and they declined in 2003 because of pupil absence. The teacher assessment in 2003 in Year 9 indicates standards are just below the national average. Standards seen matched these assessments in Year 9 and the 2002 examination results. Nevertheless, while standards are just below

national averages, this represents good achievement as pupils enter the school with standards that are well below national averages. All pupils achieve well, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, with the support of the teachers and the learning assistants. Fieldwork is a real strength and much of the GCSE coursework is of a very high standard.

57. The good achievement is the result of good teaching, which is brisk and purposeful so that much is achieved. This has improved since the time of the last report. Teachers have high expectations and challenge and enthuse pupils through questioning that is probing and which makes pupils think. Aspects of assessment in Years 7 to 9 are unsatisfactory because National Curriculum levels are not always given and pupils do not know how to raise their standards. Pupils' learning is good, although pupils are not asked to write at length often enough so that their literacy skills can develop. Only one unsatisfactory lesson was seen, the result of unsatisfactory behaviour management.
58. Leadership and management are good, with a clear direction for the subject. However, resources are inadequate and unsatisfactory as pupils do not have their own textbooks. The quality of teaching and learning are reduced because of an inadequate use of information and communication technology, although programmes are planned into the schemes of work. The department has made unsatisfactory progress in these areas since the last inspection.

History

Provision for history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good and sometimes very good.
- The subject is managed well in the absence of a designated head of department.
- Relationships in the classroom are very good.
- Many pupils find difficulty in expressing their ideas in writing.
- A commendable emphasis is placed on raising standards of literacy.
- Information and communication technology is underdeveloped as a departmental resource.

Commentary

59. In lessons seen and work analysed during the current inspection, standards are below those expected nationally by the end of Year 9. Many pupils come to history lessons in Year 7 with very low standards of literacy and very limited understanding of the subject. They soon acquire historical skills, such as the use of sources and understanding the importance of chronology so that achievement by the end of Year 9 is satisfactory. Many lack the ability to analyse and interpret historical evidence and low levels of literacy inhibit many pupils from expressing their views adequately in writing. In recent GCSE examinations, results in the A* to C range have been well below national expectations and in the A* to G range they have fluctuated at or below the national norm. Standards of work seen confirm this picture. However, achievement overall is satisfactory. Some higher attaining pupils have a firmer grasp of extended writing and can examine sources critically. Lower attaining pupils, however, and those with special educational needs are struggling with the demands of the GCSE course. Strenuous efforts are being made to address this issue through the provision of more suitable learning materials and an emphasis on raising standards of literacy through a focus on key words and extended writing.
60. The quality of teaching is good and there are examples of very good practice. Teachers use classroom management techniques effectively and this gives pupils the confidence to develop their learning skills. In most lessons, teachers employ effective methods to promote good learning and questioning techniques are used very well to include all pupils in classroom discussions. Lessons are planned well and pupils are encouraged to air their opinions and demonstrate their historical skills. Most pupils behave well and there are very good relationships in class between teachers and pupils. A small minority of pupils, mostly boys,

have limited attention spans and this results in a lack of concentration, especially when faced with written tasks.

61. There is at present no head of department but the subject is managed well by the teacher in charge and very well supported by a member of the senior management team. Marking of pupils' work is very thorough and there is a clear development plan for the subject. Information and communication technology, however, is underdeveloped as a departmental resource and there are no visits to places of historical interest to enhance the curriculum. Overall, good progress has been made since the previous inspection to address the issues of unsatisfactory teaching and the lack of progress in developing historical skills. There is an urgent need now to provide departmental leadership in order to take the subject forward.

Religious Education

Provision for religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils develop a good understanding of major world religions.
- The new teacher in charge manages the department effectively with very strong support from a member of the senior management team.
- Debate and discussion in class need a tighter structure in order to engage all pupils and improve learning.
- The subject makes a strong contribution to pupils' multicultural development.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to visit religious sites.
- Marking does not give pupils sufficient advice on how to improve their work.

Commentary

62. In recent GCSE short course examinations, results have been below national expectations. In lessons seen and work analysed during the inspection, standards are below those expected by the locally agreed syllabus at the end of Year 9. Major contributory factors to this are the very low levels of literacy and subject knowledge exhibited by many pupils when they enter the school. Despite this, pupils develop a good understanding of Christianity and other major world religions such as Hinduism and Islam and this has addressed an issue arising from the previous inspection report. Overall, achievement by the end of Year 9 is satisfactory. Pupils are less adept, however, in learning from religions and in making a personal response to spiritual and moral issues. In Years 10 and 11, standards seen are below average but achievement, due to sound teaching, is satisfactory. Higher attaining pupils show a good understanding of issues such as marriage and the family and the contemporary roles of men and women, but written work lacks depth and insight, as was the case during the previous inspection. The range of materials available to help pupils with special educational needs in their work is not sufficiently wide ranging and needs further development.
63. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. The teacher in charge of religious education has secure subject knowledge and uses a variety of techniques to stimulate pupils. In lessons where teaching is stronger, pupils know precisely what to do and there is a sense of rigour and purpose to lessons that encourages all pupils to do their best. In some lessons, however, classroom debate lacks structure and tasks are not always suited to individual needs. On the whole, pupils behave well and show respect for their teachers and for each other. They enjoy taking part in discussions but boys in particular are more reluctant to commit their ideas to paper and they are also less inclined to take part in debate.
64. There is no qualified head of department at present, but the subject is managed efficiently by a teacher in charge with very strong support from a member of the senior management team. There is a clear development plan for the subject and schemes of work are now in place, but clearer assessment procedures are needed in order to give pupils more advice on how to raise their levels of achievement. Classroom resources are managed well but pupils would

benefit from opportunities to visit local religious sites and there is at present little use of information and communication technology within the department. The subject makes a strong contribution to pupils' multicultural development. Overall, the subject has made satisfactory progress since the previous inspection, but some issues, notably standards and staffing, still need to be addressed.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement in graphics is good due to good teaching supported by assessment that helps pupils to improve their work.
- Achievement and progress of lower attaining pupils are good because of the support from teachers and learning support staff to help them make progress in lessons.
- Standards currently are too low. This is due in part to the organisation of the curriculum in Years 7, 8 and 9 that hinders the depth of coverage in some material areas.
- Higher attaining pupils do not always achieve as well as they should because of the lack of challenging activities.

Commentary

65. Standards at the end of Year 11 in 2002 and 2003 were below national averages. Standards in graphics are better and many pupils gain above their predicted grades. Standards by the end of Year 9 according to teacher assessments are below national averages. Standards seen during the inspection are below national averages by the end of Years 9 and 11. Achievement in lessons in Years 7 and 8 is good. Pupils enter Year 7 with variable skills, knowledge and understanding in this curriculum area. Achievement at the end of Year 9 is satisfactory. Pupils use basic research skills, generate ideas and use a range of tools and equipment competently. However, the organisation of the curriculum in Years 7 to 9 means that there is insufficient time in some material areas for pupils to gain sufficient depth of knowledge. Achievement in graphics in Years 10 and 11 is good and satisfactory in food and resistant materials. Pupils develop a good understanding of the design and make processes and apply them well to develop their chosen projects. Pupils' use of technical and extended language is weak and this affects the standard of the analytical and evaluative writing in coursework. The use of number is good and information and communication technology skills are developing in Years 7 to 9 and are satisfactory in Years 10 and 11.
66. Overall, teaching is satisfactory with examples of good teaching. Lessons are effectively planned with learning objectives shared with pupils so that they understand what is expected from them during the lesson. Teachers manage behaviour well ensuring that practical lessons are safe. Pupils enjoy practical work and with the good individual support they receive from teachers and learning support assistants, lower attaining pupils make good progress in lessons. However, some activities lack sufficient challenge to develop the ability of higher attaining pupils and there are inconsistencies in the promotion of literacy skills. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 who take graphics have a good understanding of their current performance and are clear about what they need to do to improve.
67. Leadership and management are satisfactory with a clear direction for the department and a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses. There are appropriate priorities identified but the strategies to raise attainment and secure improvements are not specific enough. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory with improvements in designing skills and assessment procedures. Issues with the curriculum still exist but there are plans to eliminate these in the near future.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

The quality of provision is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching results in good achievement by pupils.
- Aspects of assessment are unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9.
- Relationships are good, which motivates pupils to succeed.
- There is insufficient use of information and communication technology.
- There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to visit museums and art galleries which are needed to enliven the subject.

Commentary

68. Standards have improved in the GCSE examinations, although they are still well below the national average. The assessments made for Year 9 pupils in 2003 show that standards were below those attained nationally. Standards seen in Year 9 matched those of 2003, while in Year 11 standards, while below those expected, have improved. This is good achievement as pupils enter the school with standards that are well below those expected in both painting and drawing skills because they have had little experience of the subject. All pupils achieve well, including those with special educational needs, where they frequently attain standards that match those of their peers.
69. The good achievement is the result of good teaching, which is often imaginative in order to encourage pupils' individuality and creativity. The good relationships also encourage this. The one unsatisfactory lesson seen was the result of inadequate content to the lesson. Sketchbooks are well used for homework, but the amount seen in Years 10 and 11 is inadequate to allow pupils to fully develop their skills and interests and frequently their annotations need to be extended to show their understanding. Assessments given in Years 7 to 9 do not provide pupils with the National Curriculum level achieved and pupils therefore do not know how to raise their standards to the next level.
70. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Areas for improvement are clearly identified, but are not yet in the process of being fully developed. In Years 7 to 9, pupils do not know their National Curriculum levels and therefore find it difficult to know what to do to reach the next level, although comments made by teachers are detailed. This aspect has not improved since the time of the last report. The use of information and communication technology to enhance pupils' development of topics and improve attainment is not yet developed because of lack of resources. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to widen their experiences through visits to museums and art galleries, although these are planned but have not yet taken place. The department has made unsatisfactory progress in these areas since the last inspection.

Drama

Overall provision in drama is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although there are variations between years, the overall trend is for high attainment at GCSE.
- Pupils achieve higher results than their attainment on entry would indicate.
- Teaching is very good.
- The management of the department is very good.
- There is a need for new staging.

Commentary

71. Pupils enter Year 7 with attainment that is well below national standards but make good progress, achieving well in the GCSE option. Achievement in the first three years of school is satisfactory. Pupils learn drama in a cycle with two other subjects. The disruption caused by this has a negative impact on learning and pupils tend to forget what was taught in the previous year. However, the quality of teaching offered in the first three years with a strong appeal to developing pupils' imaginations as well as learning new techniques, raises standards. At GCSE drama is a popular option, especially for girls. Taken over a number of years, results in drama have been consistently very good when compared to similar schools and usually come high compared with other subjects in the school. However, pupils who arrive later to the school or who have very low literacy skills are often placed in the course, which impacts on standards to some extent as these pupils are less highly motivated than those who opted for the subject in the first place.
72. Teaching is very good with a strong emphasis on literacy. Objectives are carefully explained and pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning. This results in good standards. The head of drama responds to occasional challenging behaviour from younger pupils quickly and with authority and is confident in changing the nature of the task to suit the abilities of the pupils. The curriculum offered to pupils is varied and interesting with a good level of challenge. The head of drama has used active strategies to interest more boys in taking up the subject as a GCSE option, but the recruitment of boys to GCSE drama courses is difficult in many schools. The drama studio is substantial and inviting, but the lack of new staging has an adverse impact on the attainment of GCSE pupils.
73. Leadership and management of the department are very good. The head of drama has a clear vision of the future of the department and uses data well to plan what is taught. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

Music

The quality of provision is **satisfactory** overall with some good features.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good throughout the school, leading to some good achievement. In lessons where singing is taught pupils are not given enough guidance on how to improve.
- The curriculum is well planned and contains a good and relevant range of practical activities, although there is insufficient regular practice of basic practical skills.
- Provision for information and communication technology is weak.
- The quality of individual instrumental tuition is good.

Commentary

74. Standards are in line with national averages overall by the end of both Year 9 and Year 11. The results of the five pupils who took the GCSE in 2003 fell below the department's expectations but include some A*-C grades. Standards in Year 8 are below national averages. Achievement is satisfactory overall and good in some lessons. Where it is good pupils are engaged by the content of the lesson and the quality of teaching; in free improvisation they are able to develop their ideas to the full. Where they are required to use more formal musical skills in singing and tuned percussion work their achievement is less good. The lack of provision in the scheme of work for the regular reinforcement of basic practical skills leads to an overall inconsistency in the pupils' achievement. In Key Stage 4 pupils who have individual instrumental lessons attain standards considerably higher than those who do not.
75. Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. Planning is satisfactory overall; the scheme of work contains a relevant range of practical activities and many imaginative individual lessons, but it does not make sufficient provision for the regular, systematic practice of basic practical skills in pitch and rhythm. Lessons are conducted at a lively pace and with good humour; pupils respond with enthusiasm and a willingness to please. Sometimes the

teacher's approach is too informal and leads to some unsettled behaviour. Beginnings and ends of lessons are not calm and ordered enough. When singing is taught, pupils are not given enough guidance on how to improve their breathing or tone. In Key Stage 4 there is a good balance of whole class teaching and practical work on individual composing assignments. The teacher knows the capabilities of individual pupils well and is skilled at adapting the lesson content to match their specific needs. During practical group work interventions are generally well judged and support the pupils' progress.

76. The department is competently managed and progress overall has been satisfactory since the last inspection. The head of department is committed to her work and knows where developments and improvements are needed. Pupils are given ample opportunity to develop their musical interests outside the curriculum. The quality of instrumental tuition is good, a choir and instrumental ensembles are well attended and pupils give successful end of term performances. Provision for ICT is unsatisfactory; the head of department is aware of the need for new computers and for staff training in their use. Very good provision is made for all pupils. Free instrumental tuition is provided for all pupils who wish it and this has increased the take up of the instrument learning.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning in all years are very good. Teachers have secure knowledge and plan thoroughly.
- Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress.
- Data is not used effectively to support assessment and set individual targets that raise standards.
- Girls' achievement and participation are not encouraged enough.
- There is good practice in teaching and assessment which is not sufficiently shared to ensure consistency in marking by all teachers.
- There are very good community links and extra-curricular activities.

Commentary

77. GCSE results in 2002 are below national standards, although Year 11 students achieved grades in physical education consistent with and often above those achieved in their other subjects. Girls' achievement and participation are below that of boys because they are not motivated by the curriculum. Teacher assessment at end of Year 9 in 2002 indicates students achieved standards below the national average in part due to staff recruitment difficulties. Over the last year staffing has stabilised and this has considerably improved the quality of provision. Standards of work seen across the school during the inspection are in line with the national averages despite being below average when pupils start at the school and achievement, therefore, is satisfactory. These standards are achieved through very good teaching.
78. Overall, teaching is very good. Teachers prepare their lessons well, have high expectations, set clear objectives and set tasks appropriate to all ability levels. They teach lessons at a pace and with enthusiasm which motivates students. Teachers have very good control and excellent relationships with students. This enables students to achieve and progress well. Students spoke of teaching in physical education very positively. All students said they had good teachers and a number gave examples of how they felt cared for and supported by them and this was evident in every lesson observed. Students' responses were almost always very good, they worked hard, behaved well and were cheerful. The department has satisfactory assessment procedures in place, but does not use performance data to confirm planning and set targets for achievement which individual pupils can aspire to. Pupils are not sufficiently

well developed in assessing their own work and teachers do not always provide enough guidance on how pupils need to improve.

79. Accommodation is very good. There is a very good range of extra curricular opportunities which enhance the students' learning opportunities. These take place before school, in the lunch hours and after school. There are also very good community links with schools and other providers to support students' development. The department has good inclusive practice. Pupils whose first language is not English spoke about how supportive they felt in physical education and all other lessons. Support for students with special education needs is very good. In a netball lesson observed the teacher enabled a student with Cerebral Palsy to compete against a group and win. There is a strong moral and social input in delivery contributing to the whole school curriculum.
80. There has been good improvement since the last report because the department is now led by a very experienced teacher, who the students aptly describe as 'firm but fair', he is a very good leader and role model and an effective manager. He is very well supported by dedicated hard working staff that are keen to take on new initiatives. There is still insufficient time for physical education in the upper school, as highlighted in the last report and this adversely affects standards for Years 10 and 11.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

Business Studies

Provision in business education is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards at GCSE in 2002 and 2003 were well below national standards.
- Teaching, learning and student achievement are unsatisfactory.
- The general attitude and behaviour of students in lessons are unsatisfactory.
- There is good accommodation and a good level of resources.
- There is inadequate curriculum time for the effective delivery of the subject.
- The teacher in charge of business has good subject knowledge.

Commentary

81. The A*-C success rate declined from 65 per cent in 2001 to 24 per cent in 2002 and 17 per cent in 2003. Since 2002 results have been well below national standards and students have done less well in business than in their other subjects. Standards of work seen during the inspection confirm this low standard and overall achievement remains unsatisfactory. Students keep accurate and thorough notes but demonstrate uncertain knowledge and understanding of business concepts and terminology. Poor concentration levels and listening skills were evident in the lessons observed. There were a few examples of very good coursework completed by Year 11 students and the most able draw information from a variety of sources, make sound judgements and analyse data well.
82. Teaching is unsatisfactory, relying too much on students copying notes from the whiteboard. There is insufficient focus on standards and how each student can improve. Clear targets are not set and there is insufficient monitoring of progress. As a result, learning is hindered and overall is unsatisfactory. Whilst the teacher knows his subject well there is inadequate testing in order to consolidate student's knowledge and understanding of the subject. The learning of students is also adversely affected by the negative attitude of some and the disruptive behaviour of a minority, which is not effectively dealt with. There is regular use of information technology, which especially enhances the presentation of coursework assignments. The evidence indicates that many students underachieve in terms of their prior attainment and potential.

83. Leadership and the management of the subject are weak. The subject has a low profile and is only available to students choosing both business studies and information systems as separate subjects, which are delivered in the same time allocation as other single subjects. This is inadequate and has an adverse affect on results. There is no support or advice available from another business specialist, although the teacher in charge does take advantage of help offered by the GCSE examination board. The subject enjoys good spacious accommodation and is well resourced. Since the last inspection report the level of resources, especially information technology provision, has improved considerably, although other identified weaknesses have not been addressed so overall improvement is unsatisfactory.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is led and managed very well.
- Pupils have ample opportunities to participate and take responsibility in school.
- Opportunities for citizenship education are particularly strong in the personal, social and health education programme and this contributes significantly to the growing maturity of the pupils.
- There is a clear development plan for the subject.
- Each pupil has a citizenship log book to record activity in all subjects and these are used well.
- Plans for the assessment, recording and reporting of citizenship are still at an early stage of development.

Commentary

84. There is a well planned programme of personal social and health education which is delivered well by form tutors and guest speakers. A particularly good feature of the course is that the curriculum is accredited and pupils received credits towards a national award as they complete each lesson. The programme is very well led by a member of the senior management team who co-ordinates the work of the year heads and form tutors very effectively. The course meets all statutory requirements, providing good information on drugs and sexual health. Overall, teaching in lessons observed was at least satisfactory and often good. Year 9 pupils were involved in working in teams to solve real life problems. This was an impressive occasion with pupils on task co-operating well in a busy yet controlled environment. This annual event was very well staged and organised and reflected the high standard of this provision.
85. The co-ordinator for personal, social and health education also manages the provision for citizenship. It is not possible to make an overall judgement about standards and achievement in this subject as the school has only recently formally introduced citizenship into the curriculum and has not yet established effective assessment arrangements. In lessons seen where citizenship was identified, pupils are acquiring a good knowledge of different aspects of society and a sound understanding of the individual's role within the wider community. In the personal, social and health education programme, for example, pupils in Year 9 study discrimination and prejudice and, in Year 8, there are lessons on local and national government. Also, in history, Year 11 pupils learn how the voting system was developed in this country and study the Suffragette movement. In considering such issues, pupils also develop skills of enquiry and communication. They also have ample opportunities to participate and take action both in and out of school, for example in charity events and extracurricular activities, especially sport. There is an active school council and a well-organised prefect system in Years 10 and 11 that encourage pupils to show initiative. In most subjects there is a strong emphasis on participation in lessons and on the development of collaborative skills, most notably in personal, social and health education, physical education, English, history, art and music.

86. The provision for citizenship is managed very well. There is an accredited course for personal, social and health education in Year 9 and specific weeks are given over to citizenship activities. Each pupil throughout the school has a citizenship log book in which opportunities for activities are recorded and evaluated. The department plan is detailed and thorough. An audit of departmental contributions to the subject has been carried out and these are monitored well.
87. Overall, citizenship is now making a significant contribution to the school's curriculum and there are clear plans for further development. The key issue now is to implement a rigorous plan for assessing, recording and reporting the achievements already made in the subject in line with National Curriculum requirements.

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	5
The pupils' achievement	4

The pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	4
Attendance	5
Attitudes	4
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4

The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well the pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets the pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
The pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for the pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on the 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	2

The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
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).