

INSPECTION REPORT

LILIAN BAYLIS SCHOOL

Kennington, London

LEA area: Lambeth

Unique reference number: 100625

Headteacher: Mr G Phillips

Lead inspector: Mr R Passant

Dates of inspection: 10 – 13 November 2003

Inspection number: 258690

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 to 16 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	603
School address:	Lollard Street Kennington London
Postcode:	SE11 6PY
Telephone number:	020 7735 3105
Fax number:	020 7820 0159
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	David Smith
Date of previous inspection:	12 March 2001

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is smaller than average with 605 students¹ on roll. There are twice as many boys as there are girls on roll. In the very recent past the mobility of students has been very high. Many of those who joined had experienced a difficult education and included a significant number who had been excluded from other schools. The school is sited in an area of distinct deprivation and approximately 70 per cent of students are known to be eligible for free school meals. This is very high compared with the national average. The school population is ethnically very diverse. There are 106 refugees and asylum seekers. A significant number of refugees and asylum seekers are unaccompanied minors who start at the school with very limited English. There are about 100 students for whom English is not their first language and who are at an early stage of language acquisition. The most common mother tongue languages are: Portuguese, French and Somali. The percentage of students with additional learning needs is very high. Fourteen students have statements, which is above average. Approximately 25 students are in public care and about 24 are on the child protection register. The school is a participant in Excellence in the Cities and a member of an Excellence in the Cities Transformation Zone which has provided specific help in developing teachers' skills in mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT). It is an associate member of the specialist school trust and a participating member of Young Enterprise. The school was awarded Artsmark Gold and Investor in People (2003). It has also been awarded Schools Extra award. The school has developed a number of strategic business and city links and links with the local university and college. The school is used by the local community for various activities and operates a Saturday school for its students. Overall attainment on entry to the school is well below average and very low in mathematics and English. School analysis indicates that half of the students joining the school in Year 7 have reading ages below nine years old.

¹ The usual term to describe those boys and girls attending school from Year 7 to Year 11 is pupils. The term student is usually used to describe those in post-16 education. However, the preferred term at Lilian Baylis is students and therefore this term is used throughout the text of the report. The term 'pupils' is retained in headings and tables.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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30911	John Barton	Team inspector	French
13184	Tayeb Chakera	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
4834	Richard Frostick	Team inspector	Music
30553	Rick Fuller	Team inspector	Mathematics
20597	Clare Gillies	Team inspector	
23880	Olivia Hall	Team inspector	Special educational needs Art
1782	Andrew Lyons	Team inspector	Design and technology
31983	Debra Makin	Team inspector	Physical education
8696	Abul Maula	Team inspector	English as an additional language
5241	Cyndi Millband	Team inspector	Science
18950	Carmen Rodney	Team inspector	English
22699	Richard Stanley	Team inspector	Citizenship History
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17288	Megan Warner	Team inspector	Religious education

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² Key stage is a term used to describe a phase of education. Key Stage 3 describes Years 7 to 9 and Key Stage 4 describes Years 10 and 11.

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Lilian Baylis is an effective school. It does well by its students. It identifies their many diverse needs and provides them with effective support to gain the necessary learning skills to achieve well by the time students move into the upper part of the school. Standards in GCSE examinations are well below average when compared nationally but students attain standards in GCSE examinations that are the same as students in similar schools. For the past three years the school has added significant value to students' GCSE results - they have attained better standards than might have been expected given their starting point. The support, care and guidance that students receive are very good and directed towards raising these standards. The need to continue to raise standards is a central concern and lies at the heart of the school.

There are many aspects of the school's work that provide good value for money. However given the very high costs associated with the building, overall, the school provides **satisfactory value** for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards in GCSE examinations are low and raising them remains the top priority
- The very high level of support the school provides to individuals to help them achieve and the very good use of the developing partnerships within the broader community to raise students' aspirations and support the work of the school
- The impact of the very good leadership by the headteacher and key staff across the school in raising the staff and students' expectations, creating effective teams and the focus on raising standards
- Good teaching characterised by detailed planning, work that is interesting and engages the students, good assessment and very good relationships with the students. Teachers are strong role models and they bring a breadth of experience. There are good curriculum and enrichment opportunities
- The good provision for students' additional needs - be it because of learning or language difficulties
- The school is very aware of the barriers to raising attainment. Developing students' literacy and oral skills has been a school focus and much has been done. Nevertheless, it remains a central concern. Students find writing their ideas down difficult, especially when that has to be done against the clock, as in an examination. Standards in class and course work are often higher than examination results would suggest

The school has made very significant improvements since it was last inspected. It has addressed the key issues identified in that report very well. Standards are rising - albeit slowly. Attendance is now at the national average. Links with parents are now good. French has been introduced and effective action taken over the identified issues in design and technology. Teaching is good across the school and leading to students' improved achievement. Students have a developing pride in 'their school', and have a keen awareness of the improvements that have taken place and the school's resultant growing reputation within the immediate community. This is both a testament to what has been achieved and the commitment by the school staff to bring about this change.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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.

Students make reasonable progress during Years 7 to 9 compared with similar schools.

Achievement is satisfactory. Test scores are improving at the rate seen nationally but in 2002 were in the lowest five per cent of schools. The percentage of students gaining A* to C in 2003 was 17 per cent, which is average compared with similar schools. There is a determination to raise

levels of attainment but the percentage of students gaining A* to C is a stubborn statistic given the students' profile and needs. The trend in the school's average point score up to 2002 was below the national trend. However, the average point score has shown improvement since the last inspection, although not necessarily a year-on-year improvement. Standards are rising and students **achieve well** in the upper part of the school. The targets that the school sets are now informed by a range of data; they are realistic and provide appropriate challenge. They indicate a significant improvement in future years.

In Year 9 tests Black African students and Caribbean heritage boys achieve results above the cohort's average. At GCSE, girls do better than boys in their examinations. Black African heritage students continue to do well but boys from Portuguese, Caribbean and White UK heritage perform below the average for the cohort. Students with English as an additional language achieve well, as do students with special educational needs. Students who have been identified as being gifted and talented also make good overall progress, as do students who are in public care.

Students at Lilian Baylis have the advantage of working in a very ethnically diverse yet very harmonious community. Students get on very well with one another and relationships between themselves and staff are generally very good. The school is now a calm, stable and orderly community in which students feel safe. Most students behave well for most of the time **and behaviour is generally good**, although the school has to work hard at maintaining and improving younger students' behaviour and attitudes to learning. The maturity, personal aspirations and quiet self-confidence of many of Year 11 students is testimony to the school's success in the way it tackles students' low aspirations and poor self-esteem and the good provision it makes for spiritual, moral, social and cultural and citizenship education in order that students achieve good standards in their personal development. A success of the school is that the majority of students go on to further education.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good quality of education. Students' overall good achievement is the product of the **good teaching** and a **good curriculum**, which is suited to their needs, although further refinement is required to lessen the discontinuities sometimes caused by withdrawal. The provision for special educational needs and students who are developing their bilingual language skills is good. The quality of relationships between members of staff and students is a particularly important feature of the good learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The commitment to inclusive education is excellent. This stems from the **very good leadership** of the headteacher and key staff which is focused on supporting the individual student to ensure that needs are met and are leading to improved learning. Leadership is focused on ensuring that students are getting the best possible deal from the school. **Management across the school is good. The governing body is, overall, very effective.** The school, currently, does not provide a collective act of worship and in this specific regard the governing body does not meet its responsibilities.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The students' questionnaires returned were very positive. Eight out of ten students thought the school was a good school to be at, that they were taught well, expected to work hard, were treated fairly, and that there was an adult to turn to. About a third of those replying had reservations about behaviour. Parents' questionnaires were equally positive, although a significant minority had reservations about behaviour, information about their child's progress and whether the school listened to concerns. The inspection confirms that the school seeks an active partnership with parents and that through the target-setting meetings there are very good opportunities for parents to be informed about their children's progress.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve in order to raise standards further are:

- Improve students' writing skills by:
 - ensuring that students have time and opportunities to discuss and share ideas prior to writing

- providing opportunities in all subjects for extended writing
- Develop students' confidence and skills to work independently of the teacher
- Consider ways to extend students' learning through the school's initiatives such as 'learning zone', 'homework clubs', Saturday School, and homework that is adequately supported with texts and material that can be taken home and used
- Develop the continuity of students' educational experience in subjects, whilst recognising the need that exists to provide the means for students to catch up and develop their literacy skills, particularly in Years 7, 8 and, currently, 9

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- introduce an act of collective worship (the school development plan identifies steps to be taken in this regard in January 2004)

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards of attainment are extremely low when students enter the school. Overall, students achieve well. During Years 7 to 9 the school targets students' additional learning needs. This foundation is built upon in Years 10 and 11, where progress accelerates. Standards are improving, although there was a dip in 2002 because of student mobility. Girls outperform boys.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement accelerates in Years 10 and 11 and is, overall, good. Students attain GCSE results well below average but average when compared with similar schools. Students do better than expected from their starting points, as reflected in the added-value measures
- There is a corporate commitment to raising standards, which stems from the headteacher and senior managers, and many relevant strategies are in place that include very careful tracking of students' progress
- Students' low self-esteem, although tackled by the school, along with limited independent learning skills and poor writing skills, remains a serious limitation to raising attainment

Commentary

1. Students make reasonable progress and overall achievement is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 when their progress, the value added, is compared with that of students in similar schools. Standards in National Curriculum tests are improving broadly in line with those nationally but are still very low compared with national figures in the lowest five per cent of schools. They are also well below average when compared with similar schools.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 9 – average point scores in 2002³

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.3 (26.1)	33.3 (33.0)
mathematics	27.8 (24.6)	34.7 (34.4)
science	27.1 (23.2)	33.3(33.1)

There were 97 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. The fact that students make reasonable progress but attain results well below average requires an understanding of the very low attainment on entry to the school. Attainment on entry is very low, in the lowest five per cent of schools nationally. That figure is boosted somewhat by slightly better attainment in science. Attainment in English and mathematics is even lower. If progress was to be measured against schools scoring similar English scores then the overall attainment would be average. Assessment data over the past five years show that two out of three students have very low reading ages when they start at Lilian Baylis. By Year 9 a quarter of these students and a fifth of Year 10 and 11 students are seven or more years below their reading age. Standards on entry are improving but the very low starting point continues to have a detrimental impact on standards.
3. The school has taken the decision to target low literacy skills in a range of catch-up activities. The school disapplies (that is, seeks official approval to withdraw) a very large number of its students from the requirement to teach the full range of National Curriculum subjects, in order

³ The results are for 2002 because the Year 9 English tests are being remarked.

that it can tackle the low level literacy skills of its students and it has targeted its staffing resources to achieve that aim. The majority of students require specific support to address their language learning needs and their specific learning difficulties, as well as others participating in reading recovery programmes and other catch-up literacy activities. The intention is not to withdraw students from the core subjects of English, mathematics and science but they are withdrawn from other subjects either completely or partially. The withdrawal process is considered carefully and a re-induction process is completed to reintegrate students when their basic skills are at an appropriate level. The school's intention is to concentrate the support eventually into Years 7 and 8, although at present the support is directed across all three years of the lower school.

Standards in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11 in 2003

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	17 (6)	52.6 (49.9)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	74 (76.1)	88.6 (90.9)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	99 (100)	94.6 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	22 (20.1)	34.7(39.8)

There were 94 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

4. Standards are GCSE are well below average compared with national results but are average when compared with similar schools. Achievement improves in Years 10 and 11 and students make better progress than might be expected from their starting point. Overall, achievement is good because of the foundations laid in Years 7 to 9.
5. For the past three years students have done better than might be expected, as reflected in the added-value measures. In 2002, the percentage of students gaining A* to C grades in their examinations fell to six per cent. This was because it was the year group most affected by falling roll when the school was placed in special measures. Because it had room in that particular year group a significant number of students joined it at times other than the start of the academic year. Many of these students had experienced a troubled education. The percentage reverted to 17 per cent in 2003 – roughly where it was before. Although the school is committed to raising standards the percentage of students gaining A* to C grades is a stubborn statistic which the school is finding hard to shift. The average point score has improved in recent years and standards are rising - albeit slowly. Girls are consistently outperforming boys in examinations by significantly more than the difference seen nationally. The school uses two national systems of testing and information systems, in addition to National Curriculum data. These two information systems have, over time, proved an accurate predictor of National Curriculum test scores in Year 9 and GCSE scores. The version for GCSE divides students into four bands with their likely outcomes at GCSE. Two - thirds of the students in bands A and B, and numbers are relatively small, attained five A* to C grades and all attained five A* to G grades. Students in Band C of the system did better than predicted, with nine out of ten students gaining five A* to G grades.
6. The school now sets targets which are both challenging but realistic. Formerly, targets were aspirational – to raise expectations of staff and students. They are now informed by data. They are set at 25 per cent of students gaining A* to C grades in 2004.
7. Students with special educational needs achieve in line with other students. Most make good progress towards targets set in their individual education plans. They meet the majority of their targets through effective teaching and support and work that is well matched to their individual needs. Students with statements, make good progress through carefully planned, well-focused and experienced in-class support. Students with very low reading ages make satisfactory progress, overall. Reading progress under the current literacy programme has yet

to be evaluated. In withdrawn groups for additional reading students receive good individual support and reading texts are interesting, multicultural and challenging. Students with statements in Years 10 and 11 are making good progress on the NVQ course in Food Preparation because it is work-related and their experience with the local university is positive and motivating.

8. The school has a high proportion of students learning English as an additional language with a significant minority also being on the special educational needs register. Many, particularly those in Years 10 and 11, make good progress and achieve well in relation to their prior attainment in lessons and over time. Specialist support reinforces their knowledge and understanding of GCSE coursework, while this enables the students in Years 7 to 9 to consolidate and extend their vocabulary with words such as those associated with questions and adjectives. Speaking is limited to single words and phrases for a significant minority of these students. They read with limited fluency and comprehension, and their writing is often limited to copying. Their handwriting and presentation are generally underdeveloped. The fact that many younger students have difficulty with constructing meaningful questions unaided, and that a significant minority in Years 10 and 11 need support with retelling the story of *Romeo and Juliet*, is a clear indication of how lack of skills and confidence in written English prevents many of these students from fulfilling their full potential under test conditions.
9. Evidence suggests that, once they have gained sufficient proficiency in English, many bilingual students perform as well as, and often better than, their peers in national tests and examinations. High student mobility makes it difficult to compare the performance of different ethnic groups. The school's own analysis of GCSE results has, however, identified Black African students as high achievers and those from the Portuguese and Caribbean and White UK backgrounds as under-performing groups.
10. There are currently 106 refugees and asylum-seeking students attending the school. Most of them have English as an additional language. Meeting their needs is, therefore, part of the responsibility of the subject leader for Ethnic Minority Achievement, although they are initially interviewed and assessed by the headteacher. They receive additional support on the same basis as the other students for whom English as an additional language. They also benefit from the involvement of pastoral staff and a buddy system.
11. Little information is available about these students apart from what is gained from them and their families. Their mobility is an added difficulty. However, in order to help them gain the most from their time at the school, the school uses external services such as interpreters, the Ivorian Coast Women's Association and the Somali Association. There is also the provision of individual and group mentoring for those who are vulnerable.
12. Individual and group support enables most refugees and asylum-seeking students to integrate fully into the school community and achieve well in developing their personal, social and basic skills in English.
13. The school has a number of students who are in public care. Their progress, as with all students, is tracked carefully. The school supports them very well as part of the school's care arrangements. It provides the students with a grant for revision materials. They make similar progress to their peers and last year the four students in the cohort went on to college. In addition to these students, there is also a number who are being cared for in more informal arrangements with members of the students' family acting in *loco parentis*.
14. The school identifies students who are gifted or talented in a specific area. They are challenged through extension activities, both within the formal curriculum and extra-curricular area. Their progress is monitored closely and they do well in their examinations.
15. There are a number of factors that support achievement and the improvement in standards. Many of these aspects are dealt with more fully elsewhere in the report.
 - There is a corporate determination to raise standards that stems from the headteacher

- The relatively recent stability of staffing. The very good quality of relationships between members of staff and students is a particularly important feature of good learning at Lilian Baylis and can sometimes take time to develop. The former instability of staffing, can lead to an initial distrust of new staff that takes time to overcome. 'Their' teacher is important to the students. Students respond to 'their' teacher and often the teacher is the source of students' motivation. When their teacher is away or absent or moves on or there is staffing disruption, it has a particularly negative effect on these students
 - Students, especially in older classes, generally want to succeed and do well. Students have developed a loyalty to the school. They want the school to do well and be successful and want to be part of the community of a school of which they are proud
 - The care of staff: they show an appropriate and professional affection for students. They want the students to succeed and genuinely enjoy their success
 - Members of staff are very committed and work hard on behalf of the students. Because of the very diverse needs of students and the range and complexity of these needs this remains a very demanding school to work at. There are no easy answers to solve the challenging circumstances that the school faces. Teamwork is developed across the school, and as a result, the school shows a very good capacity to improve further. The quality of teaching has improved significantly and is now often good or better and seldom less than satisfactory. Lessons are planned and structured carefully and, overall, students achieve well
 - Fresh leadership within departments is bringing new ideas and other experiences into the school and creating a dynamic professional culture
 - The school has an excellent commitment to equal opportunities and has an inclusive ethos that fosters achievement of all the students. All members of staff, including mentors and learning support assistants, are very good role models and contribute to the process of raising aspirations
 - The out-of-hours learning, which includes such features as 'The Learning Zone', Saturday School and extra-curricular opportunities, is extending the opportunities for students to achieve success. Further development of this aspect, and improving the resources for homework to continue to extend the learning opportunities, will help
 - The work in Years 7 to 9 is providing a foundation upon which learning accelerates in the upper part of the school - although it brings with it issues relating to entitlement and discontinuity. The school has tackled very successfully poor attendance, which before was a major cause of disrupted learning, and further work is required to ensure that consistency and continuity of learning are given a high priority
 - The detailed assessment and tracking systems mean that students' progress is monitored closely and provision is targeted carefully to provide appropriate support. Members of staff know their students very well. The tracking and predictive systems used allows for careful targeting of mentoring support
16. There are however, two significant barriers to raising attainment, both of which the school is addressing:
- Many students, initially, have very low self-esteem; they lack confidence in themselves and their abilities that the school works hard to address. Developing students' confidence and skills to work independently of the teacher remains a priority. Work in class is often better than examination results would suggest because students feel supported. When that support is not there then the standard of the work is lower. Finding many and diverse ways of creating a sense of success, such as students from the school winning the Cambridge University Young Black and Asian Achievers Challenge Cup in 2002, or a group of Year 9 students winning the National Film Theatre script-writing competition, has a far greater significance for all students than simply the achievement of the participants
 - The school has invested much time and effort in developing students' literacy skills. Improving students' skills in writing, nevertheless, remains a priority. Students find extended writing difficult.

- There are two aspects which need to be considered. The first is developing students' confidence that they have something to say. Discussion, pair and group work opportunities, whereby students have the opportunity to rehearse, learn from their peers and try out ideas, is encouraged in most subjects, although too often members of staff curtail this activity and move too quickly to writing
- The second aspect of writing that students find difficult is knowing how to use standard English appropriately. Students find the formal register required to write examination answers difficult. Often they use local speech patterns and informal colloquial phrases and Caribbean Creole in their work. Some very good work was seen where the teacher insisted that a student find an alternative to 'We did read the poem'. Students learn about the formal register when teachers insist that students answer questions in full sentences and use correct terminology and vocabulary
- Currently, standards in writing are depressed because of inaccuracies in spelling, punctuation and use of grammar. Students find it difficult too to link their ideas together. Again, some good work was observed where the teacher highlighted useful connectives to introduce another point of view. This was linked closely to the examination grade criteria, stressing the usefulness of phrases such as 'on the other hand', 'nevertheless', 'however' to link these viewpoints into the essay

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Students get on well with one other. Relationships are very good. Older students want to do well. Most students behave well for most of the time and behaviour is generally good. Attendance is in line with the national average. There has been a significant reduction in the use of exclusions.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships are very good, members of staff are good role models
- The school sets high expectations for students' conduct and works very well over time to improve students' behaviour and attitudes
- Older students have a developing pride in 'their school' and its growing reputation in the community
- Attendance is at the national average- a very significant achievement given what it was at the last inspection. The use of exclusions is falling
- The provision for students' personal development is good

Commentary

17. The school is a harmonious community. Students of whatever ethnic heritage get on well with each other. Relationships are very good, both between themselves and members of staff. The quality of relationships between members of staff and students is a particularly important feature of the good learning taking place in the school. Members of staff are good role models and the ethnic diversity of members of staff is an added strength. The school promotes good relationships and racial harmony very well.
18. The school is now calm, stable and orderly. The majority of students feel safe. Most students behave well for most of the time and behaviour is generally good, although the school has to work hard at maintaining and improving students' behaviour and attitudes to learning. Good behaviour is the outcome of an aspect of the school's work. Teachers are skilled at managing behaviour in a positive manner. The school has participated in a pilot project in 'restorative justice conferencing'⁴. The school is therefore very sensitive to issues which surround bullying and as part of the pilot scheme two detailed surveys were conducted, the last indicating the progress made. Whilst students acknowledge that there is some bullying, those spoken to

⁴ In this project the 'victim' meets with the 'perpetrator' along with a senior member of staff. It is usually reserved for serious incidents -most often these have taken place outside of school - but which are below the school's tariff for exclusion.

were clear that the school took the issue very seriously and tackled the issue

effectively. Peer mentoring and 'Bullywatch' are two specific strategies that the school has introduced at the student level to minimise students being a target of created rumours, 'cussing' or physical harassment.

19. Many younger students find the responsibilities of being part of a learning community difficult, lacking in the ability to concentrate, especially when tackling tasks which they find difficult, such as writing. Many students find concentration for the full hour of lessons difficult and productivity tends to drop in the last ten minutes. The school identifies early those students who might be at risk of exclusion and provides a carefully structured curriculum where they reflect upon their behaviour and earn the right to rejoin lessons. Their progress is monitored very closely. The success of the scheme is that vulnerable Year 11 students who went through the scheme are in school taking their GCSE examinations.
20. Many of Year 11 students have a mature outlook. In discussion they display a quiet self-confidence and have personal aspirations to continue with their education, which is testimony to the school's success in promoting good standards in students' personal development. Older students are interested in school life and take their responsibilities within the community seriously. They want to do well. A particular success of the school is that the majority of students go onto further education. Again this outcome is achieved over time.
21. Many younger students have low self-esteem; they lack confidence in their abilities and require considerable work by the staff to achieve any sense of success. The spiritual, moral, social, cultural and citizenship provision in the school is good and leads to the developing positive attitudes that students have towards the feelings and beliefs of others, the principles of right and wrong and responsibilities of working within a community. The school works hard to foster students' sense of self-belief through constant encouragement and praise. The citizenship programme, part of personal, social and health education, provides good opportunities to explore human rights and responsibilities with the result that students in Year 10 and 11 particularly enjoy the responsibilities of the prefect role and show very mature attitudes to caring for and supporting other students. In religious education, students learn about other faiths and moral codes and the school is very clear about what is and is not acceptable in terms of behaviour.
22. Most students with special needs like school and work hard. They value their teachers' efforts on their behalf and take part in all the school's activities, including homework clubs where they make satisfactory and sometimes good progress towards becoming independent and taking responsibility for their own learning. Special needs students are very well integrated with mainstream groups and are well accepted by other students.
23. Most students learning English as an additional language respond well to specialist support, reflecting their positive attitudes to learning. This, combined with the care that the school takes of them, enables them to integrate well into the school community, relating to each other and adults with care and courtesy. They are, generally, well-behaved. Individual and group support enables most refugees and asylum-seeking students to integrate fully into the school community and achieve well in developing their personal, social and basic skills in English.
24. The students' questionnaires returned were very positive. Eight out of ten students thought the school was a good school to be at, that they were taught well, expected to work hard, were treated fairly and that there was an adult to turn to and work was assessed helpfully. About the same number felt trusted to do things on their own and that worthwhile homework was set regularly. Three-quarters of those responding thought that the school was well run and that there was no bullying or racial abuse. About third of those replying had reservations about behaviour. Roughly one in ten students strongly disagreed with the statement relating to behaviour.

25. There are good links with outside agencies such as the Safer Schools Partnership Police Officer.

Attendance

Attendance is at the national average. There has been a very significant improvement in attendance since the last inspection. Procedures for reaching this state are very good and have required very significant investment of time, effort and expense in that the school employs a full time attendance 'officer'.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	7.8	School data	1.0
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.

Exclusions

The use of exclusions has been reduced very significantly. Exclusions are appropriate in that the school has a clear tariff of sanctions, which includes exclusion for certain kinds of behaviour. They are properly handled. Most exclusions are for anti-social behaviour outside of school and are used as a means of involving parents. Two-thirds of the students who are excluded for a fixed term period do not re-offend.

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	79	14	2
White – Irish	9	1	0
White – any other White background	31	3	1
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	1	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	21	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	177	37	2
Black or Black British – African	155	7	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	33	0	0
Chinese	14	2	0
Any other ethnic group	71	2	0
No ethnic group recorded	3	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Overall, the quality of education is good. Teaching and learning is good, as is the curriculum provision. The quality of care and support for students is very good and there are good links with parents.

Teaching and learning

Learning that takes place in classrooms is good but students often lack independent learning skills. Students achieve well because of good teaching and the quality of relationships between teachers and students.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan well and in detail work that is interesting and engages the students. Classroom management is often very skilled
- Overall very good assessment strategies are in place and are used well
- Teachers are strong role models

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 131 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactor y	Poor	Very Poor
1 (1 %)	30 (23%)	54 (41%)	43 (33%)	3 (2%)	0 (0%)	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.

26. Learning in lessons is good and is directly related to the good teaching that goes on across the school. Of the lessons seen, two-thirds were good or better and teaching was very seldom less than satisfactory. A quarter of lessons seen were very good.
27. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They are confident, and plan in detail and successfully to meet the diverse needs of the students. The very good relationships that they have with the students allow them to create a learning ethos that is secure and encouraging and very inclusive. They get on well with the students and want them to succeed. One gets the impression that they enjoy working with them. They are skilled at managing students' behaviour; classroom management is also good. There is effective partnership with other adults working alongside them. Members of staff show considerable skill in the use of ICT, particularly the use of the interactive white-boards which they use to very good effect to focus students' attention. Questioning is often skilled but sometimes students' discussions are curtailed too quickly to move the students on to writing. The use of homework is satisfactory.
28. Teachers' skills promote good learning in lessons. Although listening skills can be variable generally students are engaged and apply themselves to the task in hand. Teachers are skilled at ensuring that they know what it is they have to do and for making time at various points in the lessons to revitalise their interest. Some students find the hour-long period difficult and concentration wanes in the last ten minutes or so. They are able to work collaboratively. They are also able to work independently in lessons when the teacher is there to provide psychological support. Some students find genuine independent skills more difficult, along with recall of information. Writing at length without support whilst trying to remember facts, and all against the clock, is a difficult skill for many students.
29. The quality of teaching of students with special educational needs is good. Learning support assistants provide very effective in-class support for students who have Statements of Special

Educational Needs, and those at the school action and school action plus stages of need. This support is particularly effective in lessons where teachers carefully plan activities to match students' particular learning needs. For example, in a low set Year 9 mathematics lesson, the skilful use of questioning and the active role of the learning support assistant meant that a wide range of students achieved success in learning how to cancel fractions. In this lesson, interactive teaching methods and resources were very good and the extra support provided by the learning support assistant was carefully targeted and well-structured.

30. The English as an additional language subject leader is an effective practitioner and works closely with the learning support assistants to monitor work in classrooms against targets set. These are linked closely to all available assessment information, which helps identify 'target' groups of bilingual learners. The subject leader also works with students, either for a whole class (as seen in Year 7) or with a target group (as seen in Years 10 and 11). These approaches make sure that activities are well resourced, if not always appropriately matched to the full ability range within a group. The subject leader's teaching is rooted in skilful questioning which reflects an awareness of the principles incorporated in 'A Language in Common'. The subject leader has brought about an important by-product. He makes the teachers he works with aware of the skills essential to communicating with beginner-bilinguals in ways which contribute to their professional expertise. Bilingual students benefit from the strategies used by mainstream teachers. Some members of staff also speak languages other than English. Where these are matched to students' own languages, they are often used to promote learning. The work of the learning support assistants is satisfactory, and sometimes good. Their students gain a great deal from small group support, individual mentoring sessions and the homework club they run.
31. The school identifies those students who have the potential for attaining well in GCSE and tracks their progress carefully to ensure that they are achieving as they should. They are identified to staff along with all students' additional learning needs so that appropriately challenging work is provided for them, both within the formal and extra-curricular range of activities.
32. Overall, assessment is very good. Assessment and identification of students with special education needs is good. Literacy levels are assessed on entry through the use of standardised testing procedures. Teachers are provided with the latest information, including standardised test data from the special educational needs co-ordinators, and most make effective use of these data to set targets and plan individual programmes. Individual and class education plans containing targets and strategies to use in the classroom are reviewed regularly for students and monitoring and recording of their progress are good. Students' views are included effectively in annual reviews and the procedures meet statutory requirements.
33. The school's assessment scheme is very well-structured and its universal implementation provides well-focused guidance to students to help them direct their study. Teachers thoroughly and regularly mark students' work, although do not always pick up on grammatical or spelling mistakes. Standards are generally closely related to National Curriculum criteria. This is particularly evident in design and technology, geography and in mathematics. For modern foreign languages there is lack of consistency and for art, teacher-assessed tasks are not sufficiently related to national standards.
34. By considering the targets set for them, students have become self-critical and strive to improve. In a citizenship lesson, a good example was observed when Year 10 students, considering 'human rights', reflected and ranked their own work on a five-point scale. For religious education, a 'traffic light' system, grading the difficulty of tasks, enables students to take responsibility for their own learning by selecting work in the light of their understanding and skills. Teachers are very good at modifying their lesson planning as a result of students' oral responses and written work.

35. The school completely updates its excellent assessment database three times a year. The information, together with future targets is used well to inform parents and students of progress. Comparisons between subjects are used to identify less successful curriculum areas, as well as strengths for individual students, in order that teachers may provide further support. Heads of departments and tutors use this data very well in order to improve standards.

The curriculum

The quality and range of the curriculum are good. All statutory requirements are being met, apart from holding a daily act of collective worship. Students have a broad and balanced curriculum enhanced by an extensive range of extra-curricular activities. Students with additional needs are targeted through withdrawal classes in Years 7 to 9. There are good links with the community, which has served to enrich the provision.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is good provision for students with additional needs and the school has put the improvement of literacy at the heart of its planning
- What is taught is interesting and relevant to students' needs
- The provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship are good

Commentary

36. The quality and range of the learning opportunities offered by the school are good. All students now study a modern foreign language from Years 7 to 9 and may then pursue this as an option in Year 10. ICT is now offered across the school. Dance and the full range of design and technology experiences are now provided.
37. Most students are very insecure in their understanding of how to use standard English when speaking, reading or writing. This is continuing to depress standards. The school has placed developing students' literacy skills at the heart of its planning. Improving literacy skills is complicated further by the large number of students with additional needs, either because of difficulties in learning or because they are still at the early stages of learning English. The school is tackling the problem in two main ways.
38. First, all teachers are aware of students' language needs because of the thorough assessment. The detailed literacy policy provides clear guidance on how to teach literacy skills based on national guidance. Developing literacy skills is a feature of all lesson planning.
39. In addition, the school has introduced a specific reading programme to improve students' reading skills, tackling the fact that very many have reading ages significantly below their chronological age. Students respond positively to the recently introduced reading programme, which places a strong focus on phonic skills, because they can see immediate progress. However, it is too early to evaluate the impact of this on students' achievements
40. Curricular provision for students with special needs is good. Very good support is given through a range of additional literacy activities where students with very low reading ages are disappled and withdrawn for a sustained period from a range of foundation subjects. This has some limitation on students' access to a range of practical and aesthetic subjects. English and mathematics groups are taught in sets and designated lessons in each year, mainly in mathematics, English and science, have effective support for the wide range of special needs students. The school includes effectively in school life those students with the most challenging special educational needs by well-supported, carefully planned, staged entry into lessons with opportunities for 'time-out' and individual support. Students in Years 10 and

11 have a good range of opportunities to follow vocational routes. The use of specialist support from outside agencies is well managed within the school. The school meets all statutory requirements related to special educational needs.

41. Provision for English as an additional language students is also good. A significant minority of such students is also on the special educational needs register. Specialist support is focused primarily on those at the early stages of English acquisition. This is based on a structured approach involving a published English course and a team of four learning support assistants led by the subject leader for ethnic minority achievement. Support is given either by withdrawal or help in class.
42. The school has also identified a small number of students in Years 7 and 8 who because of their behaviour are at risk of exclusion. They follow a carefully structured programme giving access to some foundation subjects and teaching in English, mathematics and science but also providing opportunities to reflect upon and develop strategies for managing their own behaviour. The provision is very good. Students earn the right to re-enter main stream classes.
43. All these catch-up activities take place through withdrawal from carefully selected foundation subjects in Years 7 to 9. Withdrawal is planned carefully and students disappplied. The school plan is eventually to restrict this alternative supportive curriculum to Years 7 and 8. All these strategies form an alternative parallel curriculum which runs alongside a more conventional curriculum. Its purpose is simply to allow the school to target its staffing resources in what it sees as the most effective way to enhance students' literacy skills sufficiently so that they can have access to the curriculum. In this it is successful. Nevertheless, there is a tension between the two parallel structures, recognised by the school, between experiencing a coherent progressive subject curriculum and the specific needs of individuals. This is particularly the case if many students follow the alternative curriculum into Year 9 when full re-entry to some foundation subjects may be more difficult, and consequent option choice in Years 10 and 11 is inevitably restricted. Some of these elements in the provision have only been effected relatively recently and the school monitors the provision for individuals carefully.
44. The students follow the basic curriculum in Years 7 to 9, with the addition of drama. The quality of the learning experiences is good and the students have the opportunity for enrichment by taking part in a number of local and national initiatives. In Year 7, students are taught in mixed-ability groups for all subjects except mathematics and science, where they are taught in sets. In Year 8, this system is continued but modern foreign languages is banded and in Year 9 two bands are introduced for English.
45. In Years 10 and 11, students follow a compulsory core of subjects and five options. The range of options has been increased since the last inspection and there are plans to introduce CISCO and MS ICT⁵ next year. Students are taught mainly in mixed groups but are again set for mathematics and science and also ICT. Using the increased flexibility that now exists, there are in each year a small group of students who follow a more vocational curriculum and attend the local college and university. Some are supported within the school. The school operates an excellent policy of inclusion.
46. The school has been able to broaden the range of curricular opportunities that it is able to offer through funding from local government and financial support from local companies. This has led to real advances, particularly in the role of ICT across the curriculum. Pastoral input, through mentoring and extra study support opportunities, has contributed to the positive attitudes towards learning displayed by the students. Through the pastoral curriculum the pastoral team has also provided practical advice, for staff on behaviour management, for example.

⁵ These are specific ICT qualifications. CISCO is a qualification in ICT networking and MS ICT is a qualification- Microsoft Office Academy.

47. The provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Provision for personal, social and health education is good. Citizenship education has been implemented fully and is part of a comprehensive teaching programme that is timetabled in all year groups, which includes sex and drugs education. All teachers are being provided with training and resources for the new schemes and the quality of teaching seen in lessons during the inspection was good. Teachers show a commitment to raising students' awareness of matters that affect their lives and recognise the need to develop all students' personal and social skills, including their individual self-esteem. The teaching programme is also well supported by work with outside community groups and good use is made of local advisory services. The senior management team recognises the importance of personal, social and health education. They are providing resources and giving this area a high profile. This has included appointing an advanced skills teacher for citizenship to take the lead on implementing these programmes and planning for improvement
48. The school has good links with the community and provides a focal point for a number of community activities, such as adult education courses run by Lambeth College. The school is involved with, for example, the Young Vic, the National Theatre and the London Philharmonic. Businesses such as IBM and EDF offer Year 10 students work experience placements and Business Dynamics offer business simulations. Students have made visits to companies such as EasyJet, and other companies have visited the school to give talks. Local and national charities, such as Lambeth Endowed Charities and the Prince's Trust, along with city institutions, such as the Worshipful Company of Information Technologists, or City of London Mercers', fund or support the work of the school.
49. There is a good programme of extra-curricular activities including a good variety of sports, drama, gardening, ICT, music, and art. Sessions are held before and after school and at lunch-times. These are popular and well attended. In addition, the school operates a 'learning zone', which includes homework clubs and other course-related activities. The school also operates a Saturday School.
50. Provision for careers education and guidance is good. The Worshipful Company of Information Technologists, a London Guild, has been instrumental in bringing in a number of high profile companies, including IBM, Egg and Prudential, to support the school's careers' evenings. This has contributed to the raising of expectations and pupil's aspirations.

Care, guidance and support

Relationships in the school are very good, with the result that students receive very good quality pastoral care and support. This is a much better picture than that at the time of the previous inspection. New students to the school are helped to settle in quickly. Students are well advised about subject, course and career options. Arrangements to inform students as to how well they are doing and how to improve their performance are, overall, very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Admission to the school is supported effectively
- The school is vigilant about health and safety matters
- Child protection arrangements are good
- Pastoral support is very effective
- Advice and guidance in academic matters based on systematic monitoring of students' achievement, are good
- There are good opportunities to gauge students' views

Commentary

51. Good links with the neighbourhood feeder primary schools help smooth the transition to the school. Over eight out of ten parents thought induction arrangements were good. The peer mentoring, in which older students mentor younger students, gives a further sense of security to the students. Students are well advised about personal matters, and with the help of Connexions, the agency concerned with careers, about academic options and careers.
52. Students' pastoral needs are rigorously identified and thoroughly met through a well-organised pastoral care and support system headed by the deputy headteacher, who has a social work background. The provision includes an active pastoral team and a school-based social worker, who warmly support students in a variety of ways. Students with difficult circumstances or who are at risk of underachievement owing to behavioural problems are further helped by school mentors and counsellors from voluntary community organisations, the south Bank University and Kings' College. Students who have special educational and language needs are also supported effectively. The support system is highly relevant to students' needs and enables them to achieve well. Students appreciate what the school does for them.
53. The personal, health and social education programme raises students' awareness of relevant social and welfare matters. First aid procedures are in place, equipment is well maintained and there is good awareness of safety in the school. Risks are assessed regularly. The school has many vulnerable students who have complex needs. The deputy headteacher is the designated teacher for child protection. He has good knowledge of agreed child protection procedures and keeps others informed of issues. Students are well served by the relevant external agencies and the visiting specialists.
54. Teachers know their students well and are sensitive to their personal circumstances. There is an effective system of assessing and reporting students' progress. The 'gradesheet' system to measure individual achievement against agreed targets and the use of this information to support students' performance work very well. The reporting procedures and exchange of pastoral information amongst staff provide further means to monitor students' personal development. This, along with the system of rewards and sanctions, provides a deterrent for any oppressive behaviour like bullying. Progress of students with specific educational needs is particularly well monitored.
55. Students have many opportunities to air their view; for example, through the work of the student council, the bully box system and the governors' focus groups.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's partnership with parents, satisfactory at the time of the previous inspection, is now good and has a positive impact on students' learning. Links with other schools and colleges are effective. Links with the wider community support the school and students very well. The school contributes positively towards the local community development by providing educational opportunities through its links with local college.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good links have been developed with parents
- Communication with parents is generally good
- Links with the community are very productive
- The school provides a good range of educational opportunities for parents and members of the local community

Commentary

56. The school encourages parents to become involved in the education of their children. They receive termly reports and are invited to individual and collective consultations, which are well attended. The academic review days, when targets to improve students' performance are set and support is agreed, provide another opportunity for parents and the school to work together. The school also runs termly curriculum orientation evenings and 'how to help your child revise' events for each year group. The pastoral support team is effective in reaching out to parents.
57. There are a number of educational and support programmes for families connected to the school. They include a family-learning programme, which has looked at arts based activities. Further programmes regarding parenting are planned. Participation in such initiatives has been moderate. The school also reaches out to the local community by providing adult education, 'sure start' and hiring out its premises. Such opportunities bring some parents to the school but have an incidental rather than direct impact on students' learning.
58. The school prospectus and the governors' annual reports are good. Progress reports to parents inform them of what students are achieving but do not explicitly inform the parents about what students should have been doing or exactly what parents can do to raise their children's achievement. However, parents have many opportunities to discuss their children's progress and targets for improvement. Some parents would welcome better information on matters such as what is being taught at the school and how well their children are learning.
59. The school can rely on parents' support in dealing with problems related to their children's learning and development. Attendance at the special educational needs review meetings is good. Many parents showed good interest when consulted on matters such as sex education policy. There is no parents' association at present although some parents are interested in forming one.
60. Effective liaison exists with the neighbourhood primary schools, supporting smooth transition to the school. Partnerships with South Bank University and Lambeth College support the school with its curriculum and learning programme. The school provides student teacher placements. This means that there is an additional group of adults to support students' learning and an additional range of relevant role models. A variety of visits and visitors support students' learning. Students have benefited from an artist, a writer and a photographer in residence. Local charities and voluntary community organisations provide mentors, therapists and counsellors who contribute significantly towards students' pastoral support. The school has forged good links with a range of employers and city institutions and industry. Employers support students with high quality work experience and links with industry heavily support the work and resources of the school, including provision of substantial help in upgrading ICT provision as well as support in the process of applying for the specialist school status.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Students and their needs and raising achievement are the focus of the very good leadership by the headteacher and key staff. The governing body is very supportive and effective. Management across the school is good. Finance is managed very well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The governing body is very effective although it does not meet its statutory responsibilities with regard to collective worship
- The leadership of the headteacher is very good

- The leadership by key staff is also very good and leading to effective teams being built
- The focus of the leadership in the school is ensuring that students get the best deal
- Management across the school is good

Commentary

61. The governance of the school by the governing body is very good. Governors bring considerable personal and professional expertise to the school. Many have active links with the city in one form or another and use these links for the benefit of the school. Governors are evidently very committed to the school and provide it with very good support. The governing body, using its expertise, has taken on board detailed examination of the private finance initiative associated with the new building, ensuring that the headteacher is able to concentrate on the immediate here and now of taking the school forward. It has a very clear understanding of the strengths of the school and what it needs to do. It sets appropriate targets. It has a very clear sense of direction in the 'unfolding narrative' of the school and is actively engaged in shaping the vision of the school. The governing body provides very effective yet appropriately challenging support for the school's leadership and there is a very good working relationship. It has ensured that the school has responded very well to the previous inspection. The governing body is committed to the inclusive nature of the school and all appropriate policies in that regard are in place. It does not ensure that the statutory requirement to hold a daily act of collective worship is met, although there are plans to do so in January 2004. In that specific regard it is not meeting its responsibilities. There is a strong sense of accountability to the governing body through performance management and other means.
62. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. Drive, commitment and a sense of urgency coupled with determination to raise standards and students' attainment, are key characteristics. The leadership of the headteacher and other key staff is focused on supporting the individual student to ensure that his or her needs are met and are leading to improved learning. Ensuring that students are getting the best possible deal from the school is what the school is about. This drive for raised standards is matched by the school's excellent commitment to being a school that is fully inclusive in nature. The school is concerned with raising the achievement of all its students, not merely some at the expense of others.
63. Leadership of key staff across the school is also very good. They share the headteacher's sense of purpose and high aspirations for the students and, as a consequence strategic planning is very good. They act as very good role models, 'providing motivation' and supporting and influencing staff and students. Very effective teams are forming as a result, which are tackling the challenges facing the school in a determined corporate manner.
64. Overall, management across the school is good. Systems still have to bed down. Self-evaluation, is very good as is the use of external performance data at senior management level. At departmental level good use is made of data. The school has been very successful in attracting skilled staff, with the consequent stability that results.
65. Performance management is well established; it has contributed to the rapidly improved teaching. This is because teachers' targets tie in with those for the whole school and their professional development, which is good, is closely linked with these as well. The school makes very good provision for newly qualified teachers, as they receive helpful and constructive guidance from an advanced skills teacher. The system of support for new heads of department, especially those in small departments, is particularly effective. The Investors in People award is seen in practice; for example, all teachers have been given laptops. All teaching and non-teaching staff feel valued and this certainly contributes to their commitment to the school.

66. Financial planning is very good. By careful forward planning and by working hard to access a variety of sources of extra funding the school has succeeded in enhancing its provision. In its action plans the school has clear priorities for raising standards and these are carefully costed. Spending is then monitored and evaluated effectively. There are several constraints that make planning difficult, notably the maintenance of old premises, which are soon to be abandoned, and the historical shortage of learning resources that has had to be rectified. As a result, spending on staffing is proportionally low. This has had some impact on standards, as in the relatively large classes in Years 7 to 9, but this must be balanced against high expenditure on staffing in the alternative parallel curriculum to support students' literacy needs in Years 7, 8 and 9, which is a major priority for the school. Financial control is very good. There are effective procedures for the day-to-day running of finance. Responsibilities and limits of delegated authority are clearly set down. The governing body and headteacher keep a careful control over expenditure. The headteacher is skilled at seeking out additional funding. Specific grants are spent appropriately.
67. Principles of best value are applied effectively. The school has a wealth of data on its students, which it uses to set targets for its performance. The school has developed a strong culture of self-evaluation and regularly compares its performance with other schools. It makes great efforts to secure value for money when it makes major purchases, as it did, for example, when purchasing ICT equipment. It consults regularly with parents, students and staff but does not yet do so in a systematic way.
68. Leadership of the special educational needs department is good. The learning support co-ordinators and their team have built successfully on the good systems in place at the last inspection and their commitment to total integration is an excellent feature in department planning. The new Code of Practice is in place and most staff are familiar with the changes through effective training. There is scope for extending responsibilities for learning support assistants to match their good expertise and experience and to give co-ordinators responsibility for prioritising department funding.
69. The provision of English as an additional language is well led and managed. The subject leader is aware that he has a strategic role to enable all staff and learning support assistants to meet the needs of bilingual learners to enable him to develop a more systematic approach to monitoring and evaluation of the provision. However, opportunities for their professional development have so far been limited to the weekly planning session led by the subject leader. Most learning support assistants would benefit from in-service training on how to adapt available resources to the needs of their students, how to consolidate and extend particular language skills, and how to link oracy and writing more effectively.
70. The overall line management structure for students with additional needs is particularly effective. Meetings are timetabled and structured carefully to ensure that the needs of individuals are reviewed regularly, being met, and that individuals are not slipping through the net. These formal structures ensure that the leadership of the school is fully aware of the challenges that individual students are facing. As powerful perhaps, is a network of informal support that comes from the corridor contact of senior or pastoral staff with individuals to encourage, praise, laugh with or quietly rebuke but implicitly acknowledge them as individuals requiring support.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	3,369,963	Balance from previous year	21206.
Total expenditure	3,419,718.	Balance carried forward to the next	4342

Expenditure per pupil	5652.42
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PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although standards in the National Curriculum tests and GCSE show an upward trend, they are still too low in relation to the national average
- The quality of teaching is good and is leading to students making much better progress than expected particularly in Years 10 and 11
- Students' behaviour and attitudes in the subject are usually good but there is a greater level of maturity in Years 10 and 11
- The leadership and management of the department are a strength and the committed and stable team shares a common goal
- Marking and assessment are good, with a much-improved curriculum based on national guidance

Commentary

71. Students enter Year 7 with extremely low levels of literacy skills. Assessment data over the last five years show that two out of every three students have very low reading ages. By Year 9, a quarter of these students and a fifth of Year 10 and 11 students are seven or more years below their reading age. This reflects the very low starting point of students, which is continuing to have a detrimental impact on standards.
72. Standards in the 2003 National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 were very low in relation to the national average and similar schools. Standards in Year 9 are similar to those in mathematics and science. Results rose sharply in the 2003 GCSE examinations; nevertheless, standards are still low. Students of African descent attain well compared with other ethnic groups, while boys of Caribbean descent, White UK and Portuguese students are underachieving. Girls achieve better results than boys.
73. Students' achievement is satisfactory, overall, with the small number of higher-attaining students achieving well. Achievement is much better in Years 10 and 11 where students make faster progress. This is because of the strong foundation work on literacy in Years 7 to 9. This begins to bear fruit in the last two years of students' schooling, as shown in the recent GCSE results. Given the very low starting point of students in Year 7, the Year 11 results are much better than expected.
74. Inspection evidence indicates that achievement in lessons is in line with expectations and work in students' books shows better progress than indicated by the tests and examination results. Although many students in Years 7 to 9 are keen to learn, they lack the discipline to concentrate on their work. This is resulting in some higher-attaining students, notably Caribbean boys, underachieving. In contrast, there is a strong work ethic in Years 10 and 11, where students adopt a mature approach to their work.
75. Students willingly take part in question and answer sessions particularly when they are involved in group work and feedback. Although students in all year groups can be quite vocal, they lack the confidence and vocabulary to express their ideas at length, explore opinions and use formal English where required. There are passive learners who rely on others to do the work. Reading skills improve as students move up the school. Students enjoy reading aloud

and listen intently with concentration and engagement during reading activities. Whereas higher-attaining students use evidence and background information on narrative texts critically when focusing on a writer's purpose, lower - and some middle - attaining students give a simple overview. Comprehension work is brief and students do not always use evidence to support their answers. Most do not have a wide vocabulary and this often prevents them from understanding the meaning of more complex words. With support however, they can often work out the meaning of words. Attainment in writing is well below average and is the main area of the subject that most students have difficulties in mastering. They enjoy creative writing, particularly experimenting with words to write poems but many are reluctant writers. There are weaknesses in structuring work and using grammatical features accurately. For example, students use local speech patterns such as Caribbean Creole and colloquial phrases in their work.

76. The quality of teaching is good, overall. Teachers are committed to helping students achieve their best. Students learn well because teachers use highly structured plans with clear learning objectives that they can understand. There is emphasis on vocabulary through highlighting and explaining key words and phrases. There is very good use of the interactive whiteboard in all lessons to focus students' attention on key points, starter activities and the plenary. Although teachers use good questioning techniques, not enough time is always spent on helping students to develop and explain their ideas. The content of lessons is always challenging and teachers use a range of activities to help students gather ideas, but there is still scope for matching work carefully to the needs of more able students and those at the very early stage of learning English. Classroom management and organisation are good, as is the work of the learning support assistants who work alongside students. The use of day-to-day assessment is good. Target-setting is used extensively at the start of each unit of work, with guidance on what students need do to achieve improve their work.
77. The quality of leadership is a strength. The recently appointed head of department has brought a wealth of experience to the subject. By working with a committed team, he has, within a short time, introduced new schemes of work based on national guidance. The department runs efficiently on a day-to-day basis and there is very good teamwork and mutual support. Monitoring of work is ongoing but the department does not have enough time in which to observe teaching. While there is a clear vision of what must be done to raise standards, the needs of students are so great that teachers have yet to establish a consistently high expectation of work culture in relation to writing and need to explore a wider range of learning styles.
78. Since the last inspection, progress within the department has been good. Standards are beginning to show signs of improvement. More students are now entered for GCSE English language. There are plans in place to enter all students for the literature examination. Teaching is now a strength and there is a stable and experienced team of teachers. ICT is used extensively for teaching and teachers use assessment records to inform planning and curriculum development.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

79. Few students enter the school with literacy skills that are in line with the national average resulting in most being very insecure in their understanding and use of formal standard English when speaking, reading or writing. This is continuing to depress standards. The school has therefore, taken radical action by placing literacy skills at the heart of planning.
80. Developing literacy skills is complex because of the large number of students with special needs or who are at the early stage of learning English. Nevertheless, teachers are very much aware of the language needs of students, through the thorough assessment and specific language programmes, to drive up standards. The detailed literacy policy provides clear guidance on how to teach literacy skills based on national guidance. Students respond positively to the recently introduced reading programme, which places a strong focus on

phonic skills, because they can see immediate progress. However, it is too early to evaluate the impact on students' achievements. The library provides good support in relation to developing students' literacy skills, but it is not well resourced.

81. Low standards in literacy are closely linked to some of the weaknesses in written work and hinder progress in all subjects. There are examples of effective teaching of speaking and listening in design and technology and leisure and tourism, where students successfully carry out demonstrations and make presentations. In mathematics, where oral work is of high quality, students use technical vocabulary accurately during discussion. Students often use good oral skills in French but their pronunciation is poor. Across the curriculum, there is a tendency for teachers to 'cut off' oral work far too quickly and move on to writing. This leads to students not having enough time to gather and express their thoughts or extend each other's views.
82. Reading skills are much lower than the national average but students, including those at the early stage of learning English, enjoy reading aloud. In subjects such as geography, teachers encourage students to develop comprehension skills through highlighting texts and summarising key points. Similarly, in mathematics, teachers emphasise key words and accurate reading, enabling those at the early stage of learning English to interpret comments and questions accurately. There is, however, an assumption that students understand most words, and theory and practice are not always well linked to increase their understanding of concepts.
83. Standards in writing are depressed because of the many inaccuracies in spelling, punctuation and the use of grammar. Departments such as history, geography and religious education use modelling and writing frames to encourage students to structure their work. In history, by the end of Year 9, lower-attaining students are confident when approaching extended writing. Basic literacy skills are reinforced in most subjects but although marking is detailed there is not a consistent approach to correcting common errors. In ICT, the spell checker and grammar icons are not used properly to pick up errors. There is a strong emphasis on sentence structure in religious education, whilst geography and modern foreign languages emphasise accuracy as well as analytical and creative writing.

French

Provision in French is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum has improved
- Standards are rising but are still below average
- There is good practice in teaching but because the quality of teaching is variable students' achievement is inconsistent
- The subject is led well but more time needs to be invested in providing French teachers with more support

Commentary

84. Students start in Year 7 with a general level of attainment that is very low. However, the majority have English as a second language and have, therefore, developed good language learning skills. A minority are native speakers of French. As a result, many students' potential as French language learners is higher than their general attainment level. Standards are below average at the end of Year 9. Achievement is inconsistent but is satisfactory, overall. All students learn to write accurately. However, there is little evidence of extended writing. In some lessons, students spend too much time copying models supplied by the teacher. In other lessons, however, high attaining students are learning to apply grammatical rules using the perfect and simple future tenses so that they learn to write independently. Oral skills are

well below average. Students lack oral confidence and most have unsatisfactory pronunciation. The progress made by students with special educational needs is satisfactory, overall. Their written accuracy is above expectation but they have limited oral skills. Students for whom English is a second language make good progress. Teachers work very hard to support these students, encouraging them, for example, to enter for GCSE examinations in their native language. Girls perform better than boys. However, boys' performance is improving as they become more involved in lessons. There is no significant difference in the performance of different ethnic groups.

85. The number of students taking GCSE examinations has been very low over the last few years. However, results are improving from a very low base. More students have achieved better results with more non-native speakers being entered. Standards of work seen are below average but achievement is good. Students in Year 11 produce coursework that is close to the national average. They lack oral confidence and have limited vocabulary. This, however, represents good achievement for students who began learning the subject at the start of Year 10. The standards achieved by students in the current Year 10 are close to average. In writing, they use the main tenses with relative confidence and use a wide range of vocabulary. They speak with confidence and good pronunciation though they find extended speaking difficult.
86. Students' attitudes are good, overall. They behave very well in lessons, listening and responding well to the teacher. However, they often find it difficult to work at tasks independently.
87. Learning and teaching are satisfactory, overall, with examples of good and very good practice. However there is inconsistency in students' learning owing to inconsistencies in teaching.
88. Students' learning is enhanced in all lessons because planning is good. Teachers always revise previous learning at the start, have clear objectives, which they share with students, and review learning at the end. As a result, students have a clear picture of what is expected of them and of what they have achieved. In the best lessons teachers know students well and can target individual needs, as, for example, in attempts to involve boys more in lessons. However, the potential of native speakers is not exploited as well as it might be. Teachers have very good command of French but do not always use the target language effectively in lessons. In the best lessons, teachers support the school's literacy programme very well but this is not done consistently. However, all teachers make good use of ICT, in particular interactive whiteboards, to support students' learning. Students learn well in the best lessons because the teacher has high expectations and sets challenging work. Low attaining students in Year 8, for example, are expected to master and use the perfect tense. Students are helped to make progress because all teachers carefully monitor their work. In the best lessons teachers mark work thoroughly, give encouraging comments and set very clear targets for improvement. However, teachers do not explain National Curriculum levels and GCSE grades carefully enough to students. As a result, most students know what level they are working at but rarely understand what it means. More importantly, they do not know what they have to do to reach the next level. In many lessons, students often lose concentration because lessons lack variety and are too centred on the teacher. There are few opportunities for students to become actively involved in lessons. As a result, they do not practise oral work enough.
89. The subject is well led in that there is a clear vision for the future and the subject leader offers a good role model to others, particularly in her teaching. Management is satisfactory. Other teachers are currently not supported effectively so the quality of teaching remains inconsistent. However, planning is good and there have been marked improvements in the

curriculum provision. Schemes of work do not help raise standards because they do not address progression and continuity effectively. The regular withdrawal of students from lessons for all kinds of literacy catch-up activities does affect their progress in French.

90. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. The subject has made considerable progress from a very low base.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers inspire students to be diligent
- Higher attaining students achieve well and attain good results in Year 9 tests and GCSE examinations
- Students benefit from very good resources but need more support for independent study at home
- The thorough assessment of students' work motivates them to improve further

Commentary

91. Students join the school with very low standards. Although results of tests in Year 9 are still very low, over the last three years they have improved at a rate above the national trend. Overall, students achieve at least as well as they would in around a third of similar schools nationally. The proportion of students attaining Level 5 or 6 rose by a further 10 per cent in 2003 to 42 per cent; this represents good achievement during Key Stage 3. A higher proportion of African and Caribbean students, together with those who have English as a second language, attain these standards. The proportion of students attaining GCSE grades B and C, albeit well below national expectations, was very high in relation to standards at the end of Year 9. Standards observed during lessons and from students' books are at least in keeping with those attained in Year 9 tests and in GCSE examinations. Boys and girls attain equally well. Since the last inspection, greater emphasis is being placed effectively on typical test and examination questions in order to underpin learning in the longer term.
92. Teaching across the department is at least good. In Years 10 and 11 it is very good. Teachers have consistent high expectations, which students adopt for themselves. Students' learning universally benefits from teachers' adept use of interactive boards to improve understanding; for example, in the development of concepts and in the application of techniques. Teachers are very good at adjusting the pace of lessons according to students' responses to oral work as well as written questions. They diligently mark students' work according to the school's scheme. This informs students well of standards of written work and how they can improve. The pace of learning is not maintained in a minority of lessons in Years 7 to 9 for the final quarter of an hour; students would benefit from a change of activity. In Years 10 and 11, not enough homework is set for higher-attaining students nor do they have an adequate textbook at home to support independent study skills.
93. All areas of mathematics are covered well with an appropriate emphasis on numeracy and data-handling to support the rest of the curriculum. Students have only rare opportunities to use ICT to explore mathematics from a different viewpoint. Throughout lessons, teachers take every opportunity to enhance literacy skills, including broadening vocabulary, developing a range of expression and fostering a fascination with words such as 'octagon' and 'extrapolate'.
94. Students of all capabilities generally enjoy their mathematics lessons because their work is often set in relevant and interesting contexts. For example, lower-attaining Year 10 students were engrossed in interpreting currency conversion tables and considering suntan factors in a holiday planning topic, which introduced time zones and discussion about referendums before adopting the Euro. Similarly, Year 9 students discussed enthusiastically the probability of the occurrence of events, which they had suggested themselves.

95. Students with special educational needs make good progress when they benefit from smaller classes in Years 10 and 11. Teaching assistants also provide very good support, but the provision is inadequate. For example, throughout a Year 9 basic numeracy lesson, two teaching assistants were very fully occupied on a one-to-one basis with students, but normally only one is present. Some of the Year 11 students intent on a GCSE grade C have succeeded in understanding trigonometry, but when solving problems the lack of elementary knowledge at their fingertips results in hesitancy.
96. Teachers respect and care well for individual students. They remember student absences and cater well for them upon their return. The mathematics teachers do very well for higher-attaining students, who benefit from Saturday Club and after-school support. The aspirations of a small group to continue mathematics post-16, including taking A level in mathematics, has been fired by the opportunity to take GCSE mathematics, initially in Year 10; they are currently working towards the highest grades. In 2003, four students also attained a grade C in GCSE statistics.
97. The leadership and management of the mathematics department are very good. The head of department draws upon her excellent knowledge of the students to plan strategically for individuals and year groups alike. The strong team of dedicated teachers work very co-operatively, providing excellent role models. All have high expectations and are instrumental in raising students' achievement and aspirations. The work of the department received a good report at the last inspection. The teachers have continued successfully in the same vein, taking on board suggestions in the report.

Mathematics across the curriculum

98. Most departments are aware of the school's 'Numeracy Map' and have identified uses and the development of numeracy skills in their subjects. In geography, science and technology, where this is the case, students' skills are sufficient to support their study: handling data, manipulating formulae, designing questionnaires and drawing graphs. For history, Year 8 students were able to interpret a multiple bar graph about Londoner's fears of burglary. Geometric patterns and enlargement are used in art and design and shutter speed calculations are used well for photography. In food technology, students systematically develop their skills to represent features, such as fat content, texture and taste, on star diagram axes in order to describe and evaluate similar food products. Some Year 7 students are not familiar with the use of non-digital clocks.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a strong team approach towards driving up standards
- Very good teaching encourages students to reason out a theory for themselves, although expectations of their capability are not always high enough
- Good use of assessment and high quality comments on classwork help learning substantially, but learning targets for individual students need sharper identification, and students do not always act upon comments on marked work
- Students' good attitudes towards tackling complex work enriches their learning, although skills of investigation are not exploited during class experiments or nurtured early enough in Year 7

Commentary

99. Year 9 test results were well below average in 2003 when compared with the national average but were average compared with similar schools. This represents good achievement for many

students in relation to when they started at the school. GCSE results at grades A*-C, were well below average in double science and low in single science, but achievement for these students, in relation to their attainment in Year 9, was very good. Compared with students in similar schools, they made very good progress.

100. Current standards in Year 9 are well below average but improving, as the majority are making satisfactory progress. Work of high attaining students does not always match their capability, although predictions based upon test results show that a significant minority are likely to reach national expectations. Progress, overall, has been adversely affected by an unusually high turnover of staff.
101. Year 9 students know the difference between discovery and invention and the need for scientific tests, for example, to prove that air contains oxygen. Black ink is separated into different colours by chromatography in Year 8 and solutions are successfully classified as acidic, alkaline or neutral in Year 7. Class experiments, however, are sometimes too structured and guided by teachers, which limits students' understanding about experimental method. Exercise books also show that progress slows down as they answer leading questions from textbooks rather than explaining conclusions. They have very good opportunities for developing language skills through a widening knowledge of technical words, but not enough for practising numeracy or applying ideas to consolidate understanding.
102. Although current standards in Year 11 are well below average, achievement in relation to earlier attainment is, overall, good. Low attaining students in Year 11 know how and why a farmer chooses a particular bull to fertilise a cow to obtain higher milk yield, in terms of the transfer of particular genes. High attaining students in Year 10 were unclear about how oxygen debt is caused in muscle cells during anaerobic respiration, but knew that energy is derived from glucose during this process. Investigative skills are underdeveloped because they need far more emphasis in earlier years.
103. The quality of teaching is good, overall, with notable examples of very good and excellent teaching, all reflected in students' learning. The best teachers not only know what students need to learn but how to make this happen, through crisp planning of cleverly chosen, challenging questions. Adept questioning led students with special educational needs in Year 11 to make large leaps in their learning about the particle theory of matter. Drawing out their suggestions, they were forced to think through and link ideas about the effect colliding particles have upon rates of chemical reactions. Learning is substantially linked to the positive attitudes students have towards tasks, adroitly nurtured by teachers, for instance, in supporting understanding about digestion. The actual rate of progress, however, is strongly linked to how deeply teachers expect students to understand ideas and how quickly. Expectations are not always high enough nor pace speedy enough. High quality comments on classwork are helpful to students in their learning but checks that they have acted upon them are not routine. There is scope for more involvement of students in imaginative endings of lessons.
104. Leadership and management are good. Teamwork is strong, building well on what has already been achieved and thrusting towards improving standards. Preparation areas are highly organised, previous safety issues have been dealt with, and strong technical support helps students significantly to develop practical skills. Although students share textbooks in Years 7 to 9, all use computers regularly. Improvement has been good since the last inspection. Assessment information is used well to check the general progress of individual students but not in sharply identifying specific targets that focus upon particular aspects of science. Closer moderation of coursework standards is needed to improve its quality.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in Information and Communication Technology is **satisfactory** with some good features.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good management of the department and support from the leadership of the school
- The very good level of resources and the quality of technician support
- The good teaching of ICT in other subjects, although the monitoring, mapping and recording of what is being done needs improvement
- Further work is required to develop the assessment, reporting and recording of ICT across the age range

Commentary

105. ICT is taught through timetabled lessons throughout Years 7 to 9. Students are taught in mixed ability groups. The National Curriculum statutory requirements for ICT are now being met. This was an area for concern following the last inspection. In Years 10 and 11, ICT provision includes full and short courses at GCSE level and GNVQ Intermediate level as options in Year 10. Every pupil takes ICT.
106. The provision of hardware and software has greatly improved since the last inspection and is now very good throughout the school. The ratio of students to computers is 4.6:1, which compares very favourably with the national average of 5.4:1. ICT technology is available throughout the school and is of a very good standard.
107. Levels of attainment are satisfactory and in line with similar schools, taking into account value added. Although the GCSE results for 2003 were down on those of 2002, the trend has been upwards, particularly when this is matched to classroom evidence. In relation to their previous learning, students' achievements are satisfactory. Measures taken since the last inspection have contributed greatly to the improvement.
108. In Years 7 to 9, standards are satisfactory and in line with similar schools. There are no discernible differences in terms of performance between different groups of students. Although the boys outnumber girls they work very well together. The teaching of ICT in other subjects across the curriculum is good. However, the mapping of what is being taught where, and the monitoring and assessment of students' progress need to be further developed through a centralised system. The logbooks designed to record progress and achievement in ICT for Years 7 to 9 are very good but not utilised fully. Analysis of work shows that students are making good progress in relation to prior performance.
109. Analysis of the GCSE results of students entered for the examination shows a slow but improving trend over the last three years. The drop in the percentage of students gaining a pass at GCSE level in 2003 has to be viewed against the fact that most students were entered for the exam that year compared with a selected number the previous year. There had been significant staffing issues, which have now been resolved, and the department has worked hard to achieve this improvement. There are no results available for the GNVQ course, since this was only introduced in September.
110. In Years 10 and 11, there are no significant differences between groups of students in terms of their attainment. Project and assignment work is generally of a satisfactory standard, with some students producing good work. Students handle software packages well and understand the importance of presentation. They are able to format and edit documents for a given audience. They work well independently and are able to explain their work. Students are encouraged to use whatever resources are available, for example, the Internet, to develop good computing skills. This was evidenced, for example, in their projects.
111. The general standard of teaching and learning within the department is satisfactory. Planning is good and clear guidance is given to the students. The resources and their use are good. The department highlights inclusion and, generally, the teaching meets the needs of all students. Students requiring extra help are clearly identified and are given in-class support by the teacher. Appropriate extension work needs to be set for the more able students since, at

the moment, planning for different levels of attainment is by the fact that the task set allows for differing levels of response. The use of real life situations needs further development.

112. In Years 10 and 11, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory; one good lesson was observed. Planning is good, resources well used and students' needs clearly identified. Most lessons observed tended to lack sufficient pace and rigour, often with closed activities by the nature of the task set. This did, however, allow for good student management. The students should be given more opportunity to broaden their lines of enquiry, and to relate their assignments to real-life situations. Marking is again patchy, except at GNVQ level where it is good. Monitoring and recording of work needs further development, as does assessment.
113. All staff within the department are suitably qualified to teach the curriculum. They have a sound knowledge of the subject, lessons are thoroughly prepared and the equipment is always ready for the lesson. Key skills are developed and the teaching builds on work covered previously. Lessons generally tended to lack pace but classroom management is generally good. The homework set is appropriate but marking needs to be more helpful to assist the students.
114. Most students have a positive attitude to learning. They respect staff and one another and take care of the equipment. Their behaviour is generally good and members of staff have been given good guidance to deal with any behavioural problems that may arise within the classroom. Generally, the students take advantage of activities offered to them - for example, the after-school ICT club.
115. The management of the department is one of the strengths of the school. Strategies are in place for the further development of the role of ICT, within the school. Teamwork within the department, and with other departments, is good. Training needs are identified and any training undertaken is shared appropriately. The dissemination of good practice could be further developed through continued mutual observations.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

116. Throughout the school, ICT is used to support the teaching of the curriculum in all areas. Most departments have very good ICT resources. Most use these effectively to enhance the teaching and learning, especially business studies, design and technology, English, mathematics and science. The ICT department provides guidelines and support for cross-curricular learning. The transfer of skills is used effectively. Access to computers in the library is good. Extra funding awarded to the school is used very well. The school is involved in local initiatives in ICT, particularly in terms of developing resources and access to careers through the support of the Worshipful Company of Information Technologists.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students' progress is good and shows evidence of value added to prior attainment
- Appropriate schemes of work are well developed with clear learning objectives
- The head of department provides very good leadership that has encouraged improvements in standards
- Standards are below average and strategies are required to improve attainment
- Successful learning and teaching strategies are not yet fully used by non-specialist teachers in the department

- Independent learning should be further developed in order to increase the learning skills of the students
- Homework should be used more effectively to reinforce and extend what is learnt in school
- The further development of fieldwork would enhance the learning opportunities of the students

Commentary

117. Overall, standards in geography are well below national average at the end of both Year 9 and Year 11. However, this represents good achievement in relation to students' prior attainment. GCSE examination results in 2003 were well below the national average, as in previous years, with 13 per cent of students gaining the higher grades of A*-C. Girls on the whole gained higher grades than boys. Eighty-one per cent of students following the course gained A*-G grades and this was significantly higher than the previous year. The department has introduced a number of strategies to raise the attainment of all students.
118. In Years 7 to 9 the standard of work is well below average. A large number of students have English as a second language and require considerable support with both reading and writing. In view of this, most students are achieving well and make good progress in lessons. Revised schemes of work and an emphasis on literacy skills have helped raise standards. Key words are emphasised and writing frames are used well. Teachers emphasise reading and speaking as well as using the correct geographical terms, and this is having a positive effect on achievement and learning skills. Most students' numeracy skills are good enough to cope with tables, graphs and concepts such as scale and direction that are used in geography. Students with special educational needs benefit from differentiated lesson material and the support of learning support assistants. In a Year 9 lesson, a disabled student had full access to the lesson with the aid of a laptop and a lesson disc.
119. In Year 10 and 11, standards are well below average but achievement is good in relation to prior attainment. The new GCSE course has helped the department follow schemes of work and assessment procedures that suit the students better. Year 10 students were examining the problems associated with the ageing population profile in the UK and were able to summarise the problems and suggest imaginative solutions to the issue. Many students have considerable learning and language needs but they are able to take part in lessons and make good progress. In Year 11, the coursework allows students to use a wide range of skills and provide opportunities to raise the level of attainment. Projects on the management of the coastline in North Norfolk, following a residential field visit, demonstrated detailed research, use of digital cameras, data-logging and good examples of analysis and evaluation. Structured lesson plans provide a good base for learning and revision sheets, and end-of-unit assessments support students' progress.
120. Teaching and learning are, overall, good, although there is some variation within the department and between the key stages. A variety of appropriate teaching methods is used successfully to enable all students to learn effectively. Lessons are prepared well, with clear objectives, and as a result students make good progress. The interactive whiteboard is well used by the department as it engages the students in the learning and allows the lesson to proceed at a good pace. Supportive marking with clear indicators of standards achieved and guidance on how to improve has assisted students' progress. Homework is set but it is not always completed. The subject could use homework more effectively to reinforce and extend what is learnt in school.
121. Teachers put emphasis on developing literacy skills by using key words and writing frames for extended writing. Students are encouraged to read aloud and answer questions, and, as a result, students are more confident in their use of words and this helps learning and achievement. Good classroom management in most lessons creates a good working environment and allows teachers to give detailed attention to individuals, enabling all students to learn effectively. Teaching was less effective when the teacher spoke for long periods or there was too much dependence on the teacher, not allowing the students to work at their own

pace. The challenge for the department is to encourage the students to work more independently so that they can develop their skills of analysis and evaluation. The head of department has invested considerable time and energy in developing the teams' understanding of students' learning and appropriate teaching styles. Good practice in the classroom is not yet fully implemented by non-specialist members of the department.

122. The department is well led by a forward-looking and energetic head of department. Imaginative schemes of work, innovative teaching and greater understanding of learning strategies have all helped to raise standards. Year 10 and 11 visits to Overstrand, Norfolk and London Transport Museum are now established, but there is scope for further fieldwork opportunities, particularly in Years 7 to 9. Very good display work in the department has a positive effect on students' learning. Examples of students' work demonstrate the standards required at different levels and grades. ICT is developing within schemes of work as a tool for learning. The department has addressed all the issues in the last inspection and the subject is well placed to make further progress in the future.

HISTORY

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well and standards are improving
- Teaching and learning are good
- Students are supported well in the organization of their writing
- It is made clear to students what they need to do to improve and this is helping to raise standards particularly in the GCSE groups
- Leadership in the subject is very good
- Insufficient use is made of speaking and listening to extend learning
- More opportunities are needed for students to develop independent enquiry skills, including the greater use of ICT

Commentary

123. Students are achieving well in history. They make good gains in their knowledge of history. Students also improve their skills, particularly their organization and presentation skills, which are well below national standards on entry into Year 7. There is no significant variation in achievement: all students are given opportunities to learn and extend their attainment. Lower-attaining students and students with English as an additional language are helped to achieve through carefully planned work and targeted support. More girls than boys are achieving the expected level at the end of Year 9. In the GCSE classes all students make particularly good progress.
124. As measured by teacher assessment and examination results, standards of students' work at the end of Year 9 and at GCSE remain well below national averages. However, inspection evidence and recent trends in results indicate that the good achievement in history is having an impact on raising these standards. Students' attitudes to learning are good.
125. The percentage of students reaching the expected level at the end of Year 9 increased in 2002 and, despite a dip in the 2003 results, is targeted to rise again in 2004. The students' work seen in Year 9 during the inspection shows that standards are low against national averages. However, there are indications that improved teaching and learning during this key stage are enabling more students to demonstrate capabilities in line with expectations. More students are able to ask and respond to the 'how' and 'why' questions in their history lessons, as well as to produce structured writing drawing upon their ideas and knowledge. They are also beginning to understand some of the key themes that go across the topics, although a significant number of students are still insecure in their subject knowledge. Enquiry skills and

the ability to work independently on drawing information from historical sources also remain underdeveloped at the end of Year 9.

126. GCSE results in 2003 showed a significant improvement on the previous year and further improvement is targeted for this year. Evidence from the inspection supports this projected improvement. The ability profile of the students choosing history for GCSE is higher than before and these students are benefiting from consistently good teaching, guidance on coursework and extra revision programmes. In the current Year 11 class a higher proportion of students is producing coursework of the standard required for a GCSE pass, including work that shows a standard required for the higher grades. Evidence from the Year 10 group also shows that an increasing challenge for teaching in the subject will be to meet the needs of the more able students.
127. Overall, teaching and learning in history are good across the school and this is supporting students' achievement. There is some variation in the quality Years 7 to 9, with the teaching seen during the inspection ranging from satisfactory to very good. Evidence from GCSE lessons seen in the two groups and from students' coursework indicates that teaching is consistently good. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen in history and this is an improvement since the last inspection.
128. Teachers have high expectations and set clear objectives for learning. They make good use of the three-part lesson with a starter, main activity and plenary to give structure and pace to their teaching. There is a good emphasis on supporting students' literacy skills, with time being taken to define the 'key words' in a topic; for example, 'civil war' 'parliament' and 'monarchy' in looking at the English Civil War. This is being complemented by use of writing frames to help all students organize their writing and coursework. In-class support from learning assistants is also generally used well to explain tasks and help students with their writing.
129. Effective use is made of a range of photographic, pictorial and written sources to engage the interest and attention of the students and this is often accompanied by some good questioning. Where teaching and learning are particularly good, this questioning is used to help students make links between their learning in different topics and to open up opportunities for discussion. In one lesson, for instance, the use of open-ended question and discussion by the teacher helped considerably to strengthen the students' understanding of the feelings and the problems faced by black people after the end of slavery in America. Where teaching was less effective, particularly in some lessons in Years 7 to 9, opportunities to extend students' understanding through questioning and discussion were missed and the teaching moved on too quickly to students' writing.
130. Good assessment and target-setting procedures are in place, with students being given clear advice on what they need to do to improve their work and grades. This is having a particular impact on students' achievement and progress in the GCSE classes. Progression in students' learning is also supported well through the curriculum plans for history, where the development of key skills and concepts is mapped out across the year groups. More planned opportunities are needed, however, especially in Years 7 to 9, for students to develop their independent enquiry skills in history through project tasks, homework assignments and the more extended use of ICT.
131. Leadership in the subject is very good. The subject leader for history works closely with the head of humanities and they have a shared commitment to raising standards and are using the information from the regular monitoring of teaching and students' work to identify and address relevant areas for improvement. This is having a positive impact on students' progress.

Religious education

Provision for religious education is **good**.

Strength and weaknesses

- All students follow either a short or a full course at GCSE
- Teaching is good overall and planning is excellent: as a result, students achieve well
- Continuous assessment including students' self-assessment is excellently developed: the match of work to students' different abilities is very good
- The support assistant and students make a strong contribution to students' learning
- There is a good range of appropriate book resources in the department and the library
- ICT is used well in lessons although not for research purposes

Commentary

132. All students in Years 10 and 11 work towards the GCSE short course examinations. In 2003, 16 per cent of students achieved A* to C grades for the short course and 66 per cent achieved A* to G grades. However, not all students studying this course took the examination, for a variety of reasons. Out of the 81 students who took the examination, 22 per cent achieved A* to C grades, which is slightly above the previous inspection and 91 per cent achieved A* to G grades. This is the first time for a number of years that students in Year 11 will be entered for the religious education GCSE full course. Nineteen students in both Years 10 and 11 are following the full course syllabus.
133. By Year 9, students reach standards expected by the locally Agreed Syllabus. Their gains in religious knowledge and understanding are good, although the limited knowledge of English among a significant number of students prevents them from reaching average standards in independent written work. However, through good and sometimes very good teaching, students record what they know either independently, or by using a writing frame to help them. The subject makes a significant contribution to students' literacy skills. The presentation of their work is always very good as the teacher has high expectations and explains clearly to the students what standards of presentation she expects. The teacher has high expectations of students' behaviour and insists on their full attention at all times: as a result their learning is good and they achieve well. In Year 7, students learn about the basic beliefs of Islam, such as the belief in Allah, the Koran and Ramadan. They know some Hindu and Christian stories and are introduced to the beliefs of Sikhs and Buddhists. In a Year 8 lesson, learning from religion was well-developed as students thought about what it meant to be greedy. By Year 9, students have studied what Hindus believe in more detail and gained a good knowledge of Judaism, such as the Passover, Jewish history and leaders. In the lesson observed, they were beginning to learn about present day Judaism and how Jews have often suffered from other people's prejudices and been discriminated against. In Years 7 to 9, students gain a good understanding of religions and religious vocabulary and write about topics such as 'A life of faith'.
134. Students in Year 10 attain below average standards but their achievement is good. They continue to make good progress in learning facts about Christianity and can, for example, compare Islamic and Christian views on marriage. Their work shows that they have gained a good degree of religious knowledge and understanding, and can use this to formulate their own arguments, based on different religious beliefs: for example, 'For and against co-habitation' and 'Christian teaching on wealth and poverty' or 'Islamic attitudes to the Environment'. By Year 11, students can put forward the views of different Christian denominations and can use this information to help them formulate arguments, for example, for and against abortion. 'Marriage and family life' is one of the main themes studied.

135. The quality of teaching and learning across the age range is good, overall, and there are examples of very good teaching. Strengths of teaching and learning are particularly in the planning and match of work to students' different abilities. Marking is also used very constructively to show students how they can improve their work. Students have a clear understanding of what level they are working at. In Years 7, 8 and 9 work is set at three levels and this motivates students, who sometimes begin a lesson working at one level and end working at a higher level. Although the school's system of half-termly assessment tasks is not carried out as often as in other subjects, as students only have one religious education lesson each week, the teacher has a clear understanding of what students know and understand, through on-going assessment in class related to the level of work attempted and the careful marking of their work. Homework is set regularly to develop what is learned in lessons. Regular targets are set for pupil in their books to help them improve. Very good support is given by the learning support assistant. Students with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, as well as those with behaviour difficulties, respect her and benefit considerably from her intervention and her positive role modelling. Occasionally, a few students are not sure how to begin tasks, and more individual help is needed. In Years 10 and 11, where teaching and learning are satisfactory, students are not given time to discuss what they learn with their peers and, as a result, the same students, those with confidence, tend to answer questions in class. Where teaching is very good there is a good range of activities, the balance of direct teaching and group work is good and students learn to discuss issues with their peers as well as volunteering answers in class.
136. Improvements since the last inspection have been good, with strengths maintained and improvements made in learning from religion and the introduction of a full GCSE course. Research, however, is still underdeveloped; computers are not yet used sufficiently to extend students' learning. Whilst there is a good range of artefacts they mainly belong to the teacher. However, book provision has improved considerably, both in the form room and library, where there is a very good range of books, often in sets, at different levels of reading ability. The subject is very well led. The religious education teacher works as part of the humanities department. The department has a cohesive view, aware that all three subjects study people in different ways.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

Overall, provision in design and technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Confident and knowledgeable head of department, who teaches food technology very well. Very good teaching in textiles
- Significantly improved curriculum and many more students following the subject in Years 10 and 11
- Very good leadership, with a commitment to raise standards
- More use of ICT is needed, especially computer aided design and manufacture (CAD CAM), and easier access to computers in all areas
- A determined and successful focus on students understanding the full designing, making and evaluation process underpins students' work in all areas
- Unsuccessful lessons occur when too long is spent on theory, without enough examples

Commentary

137. Students enter the school with very low standards as many have experienced very little design and technology before. In 2003, teachers assessed standards at the end of Year 9 as well below average, which was confirmed during the inspection. Nevertheless, with two lessons a

week in Years 7 to 9, standards are improving as students are taught well and make good progress in most lessons. These students are not yet producing work to match their capability. GCSE results in 2003 were below average, with only 35 students taking examinations in food and resistant materials. Current Year 11 students are likely to attain similar results but students in Year 10 will probably do better, as their achievement is satisfactory. Neither boys nor girls, nor students from different ethnic groups vary in levels of achievement, and teachers give students with special educational needs good support so they achieve just as well at practical work as others.

138. The head of department leads and manages very well. She quickly appreciated that students did not realise that the key structure of any design process is the same, whether they are studying food, textiles or resistant materials. So, in all rooms, large displays reinforce the design stage and students are now fully aware of this, and know what they have to do to reach a higher level. Their work is assessed in the same way for all disciplines so they know how well they are doing.
139. In most lessons students learn well because they work extremely well together, they are sensible and get on quickly, and they are taught to think for themselves and learn from their mistakes. Teaching, which is good, overall, is most effective in food and textiles. In a very good food lesson, Year 10 students were fascinated by the different types of pastry they made, each group having mixed flour with a different kind of fat. In resistant materials, many students, particularly in Year 11, have imaginative ideas although they have difficulty making their designs accurately. In textiles, students find it hard to cut out shapes neatly. In a particularly well-decorated classroom, the textiles teacher uses imaginative ways to keep students interested when they discuss work at the beginning and end of lessons. Teachers encourage students to read aloud and consistently focus on literacy. When discussing their work in graphics with the inspector they looked at the work of others and identified for themselves ways in which they could improve their own work. However, in a small number of unsatisfactory lessons in Years 7 to 9, students spent far too long discussing theory without its practical application, and acquired technical information which was not clear. They made poor progress.
140. The curriculum is much better than it was just under two years ago. GCSE textiles and graphics were introduced in September 2002 and textiles are now taught in Years 7 to 9. Vocational courses taught at the local college, in NVQ food preparation and GCSE applied engineering, are popular as students can see their relevance to future work. As a result of the now very good range of courses, nearly three times as many students are following design and technology courses – close to 100 in each of Years 10 and 11. A full-time technician provides valuable support. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. The school is aiming to apply for specialist status for technology and has already secured the funding for this.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the department is very good and has contributed significantly to rising standards at Year 11 since the last inspection
- Teaching is good in Years 7 to 11 and, as a result, students' levels of investigation, research and evaluation, particularly in Year 11, are improving with the use of annotation of ideas
- Art and photography artist residencies, art clubs, partnerships and visits to galleries contribute to good learning and good achievement, overall

- Drawing and painting skills are underdeveloped for many average and lower-attaining students in Years 7 to 9 because they are withdrawn for literacy programmes
- Three-dimensional studies are underdeveloped for younger students and sketch-books are insufficiently used to show the progression of basic skills
- Students' speaking and writing skills are weak

Commentary

141. Attainment by the end of Year 9 is broadly meeting expectations and achievement is satisfactory. Students' attainment by the end of Year 11, is average and achievement is good, a judgement that takes into account the 2003 results and how well students are currently achieving in lessons. Attainment looks set to improve at GCSE level with an improving focus on using ICT skills to research and investigate artists' work and with the consistent practice of annotating ideas. Boys and girls are performing similarly at GCSE and, a grade better in art overall, when compared with their performance in other subjects. However, average students' weak drawing skills are reflected in the proportion of students attaining a D grade at GCSE. The absence of a few students contributes significantly to the higher than average proportion of ungraded results at GCSE in the last two years.
142. In Year 9, students show competent levels of recording and investigative skills when they explore ideas in drawing objects from direct observation. The majority use a range of drawing materials effectively to achieve line, tone and texture with an increasing level of accuracy. However, standards of average and lower-attaining students' drawing, painting and three-dimensional studies are low and sketch-books are insufficiently used to record basic skills and processes to help them improve the quality of their work, overall. Attainment on entry to Year 7 is poor but progress in art is satisfactory considering the high proportion of students with very low reading and writing skills who are withdrawn for additional literacy support. In Year 9, students make good gains on previous years because of good teaching and the successful partnership with the National Gallery which provides funding and the opportunity for students to see original artwork. In Year 10, students revisit themes from direct observation and study artists so that they improve the quality of in-depth study in their own work. Sketch-books are beginning to show consistent evidence of analysis and annotation of ideas and the evaluation of techniques through a wider use of materials such as collage and mixed media. Extending the experience of students through the chance to work with professional artists is raising standards of achievement, presentation and research at GCSE. Some very good achievement was seen in a Year 11 group working with the resident photographer where students learned how to set up a studio 'shoot', with the result that standards of confidence in composing a portrait and working as a team to achieve good results were high. Students' motivation and application were very good because of the excellent role model provided by the professional artist.
143. Teaching and learning are good, overall. Teachers' planning is better in Years 10 and 11 where inspiring links with artists' work and the individual assessment of students' work are improving their examination performance. As a result, students move on quickly in their understanding and catch up on under-developed skills of drawing and painting from Year 9 because sketch-books are more consistently used as a studio tool. Students' learning has been greatly enhanced through visits to see original art and artist residencies. A strong feature of most lessons is the way in which students show an interest in their activities, work co-operatively and are keen to achieve. Some teaching for younger students lacks variety and average, lower-attaining and special needs students with poor drawing skills do not have sufficient opportunity to work in three dimensions so that they become more confident learners and feel successful. Many students in Years 10 are slow to respond and, as a result, the pace of learning is slower than it might be because they are unable to describe their investigations to the rest of the class and their annotation skills are less well developed - for example, in recording key vocabulary, the name of the artist and how he or she used different techniques to achieve 'mood' in the painting. Assessment in Years 7 to 9 is not sufficiently linked to students' portfolios of work to obtain accurate National Curriculum teacher assessment levels.

144. The quality of leadership is very good. Monitoring students' performance and providing opportunities for many students to work with artists has significantly raised attainment at GCSE since the last inspection. Effective day-to-day organisation and greater stability in staffing have contributed to the good achievement, overall. Resources, including library resources and good quality sketch-books for Year 7 to 9 students, are limited and this has a detrimental impact on the progression of basic skills and assessment opportunities. The quality of art displays around the school is very good and enhances the ethos of the creative arts, overall.

Drama

The work of drama was sampled.

The quality of provision in drama is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- High quality teaching leads to very good achievement
- Standards are above the national average in GCSE
- Older students display maturity in their work

Commentary

145. Across the school, students achieve very well to attain standards that are at least in line with and generally above the national average in GCSE examinations. This is brought about by consistent high quality teaching that is particularly suited to the needs of the students.
146. Students work very well for the teacher. Essentially, the teacher has their respect and students sense her warmth, care and commitment to ensuring that they gain success. As a consequence, her classroom management is very skilled and unobtrusive. The teacher creates a very friendly atmosphere where students are prepared to share and try ideas out. She is skilled at making effective interventions to move the work on and provide more challenge. There is a very inclusive ethos. All students are involved in what they are doing, participate and achieve.
147. Students' attitudes develop well as they progress through the school, so that by Year 11 they show mature social co-operative skills and work very well within the disciplines of the subject. Boys, girls and the diverse ethnic heritage groups work very well together.
148. The curriculum and the teaching have developed over time within the school and evidently works with the students. The teacher initially structures the work so that students gain confidence and success is guaranteed. Students gradually learn to make dramatic choices, refine and rehearse their ideas. The teacher has a very clear understanding of the demands of the GCSE examination, evident in the fact that some students have taken and been successful in the examination in Year 9.
149. The subject makes a very good contribution to the enrichment opportunities in the school, through the drama clubs and the GCSE drama work after school for other students who wish to pursue their interest. School productions, links with the Young Vic and other community resources, are very good. The subject also makes a very good contribution to developing students' self-confidence and self-esteem and to the spiritual, moral social and cultural development of students.

Music

The quality of provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, overall, and sometimes good
- The department is well mentored and supported effectively by middle and senior management
- The students' behaviour is good and their attitudes to music are positive
- The range of activities within the units of work for Years 7 to 9 is too narrow
- Teaching techniques need to be more varied and flexible
- Standards of written work in Years 10 and 11 must be raised
- The more able students require greater challenge

Commentary

150. Standards are below national averages for students on entry to the school. They are broadly in line with national averages by the end of Year 9. In Years 10 and 11, overall standards are in line with national averages, but the below-average quality of much of the students' written work inhibits the achievement of higher GCSE grades. In both key stages, students know and understand basic traditional notation and by the end of Year 9 many can read a single line of music at a keyboard. Keyboard performing skills are underdeveloped. In Years 10 and 11, students know how to use basic music computer software, and some apply this knowledge to good effect in composing work.
151. Overall, achievement is satisfactory across the school. Most students make steady progress. The clear structure of lessons enables them to perceive and appreciate the gains they are making in their knowledge, skills and understanding. In a Year 8 practical session the task was divided into three stages and students enjoyed the sense of achievement as they progressed from stage to stage. Some more able students are underachieving in both key stages.
152. The quality of teaching and learning in both key stages is satisfactory, overall, and sometimes good. The scheme of work for Years 7 to 9 has a good overall balance of activities but there is insufficient variety within each unit to ensure a steady growth in core musical skills, knowledge and understanding across the key stage.
153. In lessons, objectives are prominently displayed and carefully explained. Students understand what they have to do and begin their work purposefully and with enthusiasm. Summaries at the half-way points of lessons are generally effective in refocusing the students attention on the main learning objectives, but activities and teaching techniques are not varied enough during the hour-long sessions. Not all students sustain their concentration through the final twenty minutes of the lessons. Where the teaching is good, particularly well-targeted support is given to individual students during practical keyboard lessons; for example, in a Year 9 lesson advice given on arm and hand positions effected an immediate improvement in the students' performance. In Year 10 and 11 lessons are planned and organised well; students are set targets and know what these are. One group of six students made particularly good progress preparing a song for performance; another pupil could describe in detail how he is developing his composition on a computer. There is insufficient challenge for those students who are working well within their capabilities.
154. Since the last inspection, standards by the end of Year 9 have improved. The department is led competently and given valuable additional support by an experienced mentor. A range of extra-curricular activities is well attended by students. The Gospel choir and steel band are particularly popular. There are plans to develop the department's individual instrumental provision; recent visits from members of the London Philharmonic have stimulated the students' interest in orchestral instruments.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision for physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A new department that is committed to improving standards
- Well-structured and focused lessons
- A developing extra-curricular programme of competitive and recreational activities
- The low participation in the activities in some lessons
- The impact of withdrawal and its adverse effects on continuity and progression

Commentary

155. 2003 results at GCSE and standards indicated in teacher assessments in Year 9 are well below average. However, the standards observed in both Years 9 and 11 are on a par with national averages, confirming the impact of new teachers and greater focus in the department. Standards of those currently on the GCSE course reflect the very wide range of abilities within the groups. Overall, there is real strength in practical activities, but there are weaker areas in theory, where literacy skills are a key factor.
156. Achievement by Year 9 is satisfactory but there is greater variation, owing, in part, to withdrawal of a large proportion of students for extra literacy. In Year 11, achievement is good. However, in some lessons there are large numbers of students who do not participate and some who have difficulty in accepting the rules and expectations of the teachers. Those who do accept them build effectively on what they know; for example, in a Year 9 volleyball lesson, the most able players identified the strengths and weaknesses of opponents and adapted their game to increase confusion. However, achievement is varied; for example, girls tend to concentrate better than boys and often know the answers to questions but are reluctant to respond or to engage fully in mixed gender groups. Some boys have well-developed practical skills and achieve well, whilst others are not attentive, which depresses their achievement. At GCSE level, good achievement occurs as a result of interest and concentration. These students focus on tasks, are keen to be thorough and, as a consequence, improve their understanding. A large proportion in each group has language or special educational needs; these students achieve at least as well as others in the groups.
157. Teaching is generally good and occasionally very good, with very high expectations of students. Well-structured lessons and detailed questioning focus on the three strands of planning, performing and evaluating. This encourages learning on a range of levels, as performer, but also in organising and managing others in groups and in observing performance, making a good contribution to the development of social. Some very good relationships between teachers and students in GCSE lessons encourage discussion and pride in their work. Focus on literacy is improving students' use of the subject vocabulary, but there are occasions when students do not respond because they do not quite understand what they are being asked or cannot find the right words to explain what they mean.
158. Management and subject leadership are satisfactory. The new head of department has only been in post for ten weeks and has made a good start in developing the curriculum and schemes of work. Extra-curricular activities, both competitive and recreational, are being expanded and are generally well attended by students. Good use of local community provision has seen the development of opportunities in street dance and judo. However, it is very early for any real impact on standards and achievement.
159. Progress since the last inspection is satisfactory.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

A small sample of lessons were seen in **Leisure and Tourism** and **Business studies**.

Leisure and tourism

160. This is an applied GCSE course that has been introduced this year as an alternative humanities GCSE course in Year 10. Leisure and Tourism is intended to provide students with an introduction to the travel and tourist industry. Students enter the course with below average previous attainment and emphasis is placed on developing confidence in reading, writing and speaking. The nature of the course enables the steady accumulation of knowledge and basic understanding of the subject matter. Key skill descriptors are provided for each unit of work and this allows students to make progress at their own pace. Students appreciate the supportive style of teaching and feel that the varied opportunities for collaborative work, role-play and discussion help develop their understanding and evaluation skills. Imaginative teaching allowed a Year 10 group to work collaboratively on an exercise on Blackpool to develop their understanding of the positive and negative effects of tourism.

Business studies

161. In the lesson seen, students understood terms such as recruitment, retention and induction and could link them to the functions of 'human resources'. Links were established to the real world of business by good examples. Written work was accurate and detailed and showed good understanding of the principles they were studying although it was written in a narrow range of language. Learning was good in the lesson seen because the teacher had explained clearly and spent time in consolidating and reinforcing previous work. Tasks were organised well to allow students to work at their own pace. Individuals were supported effectively. The best work indicated a breadth of knowledge and used examples drawn from a wide range of Internet sources. A clear work ethic had been established; the lesson was orderly and students helped each other. Questioning was effective and targeted individuals. In the lesson seen, the most responsive were Black Caribbean students. The teacher had very high expectations and the behaviour of students was very good as a consequence. The lesson was inclusive in that a new student was being given help from the teacher and another student. In the lesson, students made good progress and overall achievement was good.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **good**.

Main strengths & weaknesses

- Students are achieving well
- Teaching and learning in citizenship lessons are good
- There is good curricular planning covering the key aspects of citizenship education
- The subject leadership is very good
- Opportunities for citizenship across the curriculum need to be developed
- There is a lack of time for monitoring and the sharing of effective practice

Commentary

162. Students achieve well across the school in citizenship. Good teaching and support in citizenship lessons and in other areas are helping to produce this achievement. Students are helped to consolidate and make gains in their knowledge and understanding of their world and to develop mature and responsible opinions about a range of civic matters. On occasions,

lower-attaining students and students with special educational needs struggle with the literacy requirements of the subject and show a lack of confidence in speaking, but they are helped to achieve through the teacher's encouragement and carefully targeted support and guidance.

163. Owing to the weak reading and writing skills of lower - and middle - attaining student groups, overall standards seen in lessons and students work are below average across the school. The pass rate for the first group of GCSE citizenship short course last year was very low; students had only studied the subject for a year but wanted the chance to take the examination. Studying the subject for a second year, along with the improved provision for citizenship across the school, and the specific help with literacy skills, should help improve results.
164. Students' attitudes to learning in citizenship are good. All students demonstrate interest and show sensitivity to the serious matters that are covered in lessons. Higher-attaining students respond very well to the opportunities provided to develop their citizenship skills both in class and in the community life of the school.
165. Teaching and learning are good. Both specialist and non-specialist teachers are secure in the subject material and use teaching methods that engage students' interest and support their learning. Learning objectives for each lesson are shared at the beginning of each lesson and looked at again at the end, allowing students to fully understand and explain their own learning. Where this is used most effectively students are asked to assess their own progress and achievement against the objectives. Gains in students' knowledge are being made through good questioning on what students already know and also because of the clear explanations of the teacher. Real-life case studies are also used effectively and with sensitivity to extend students' knowledge. In one lesson, the teacher managed the topic of child abuse very well, using case studies. This provided an effective means of helping students understand the idea of universal human rights.
166. Students are encouraged and given opportunities by their teachers to develop their skills in putting forward views in whole-class discussions on matters such as freedom of speech and corporal punishment. Where learning is particularly effective students are given opportunities to work collaboratively in discussion groups on solving a problem. This teaching strategy is, however, currently underused and not enough time is given for students to build up their skills by working with each other.
167. Outside the formal citizenship lessons, registration periods are being used very well to extend students' learning on weekly themes such as remembrance and the reasons why people wear a poppy. Other subject areas also make a contribution to students' citizenship education, although these tend to be incidental references to citizenship matters and are not planned for or made explicit to the students. Opportunities are provided for students to take an active part in the life of the school through the school council and through the prefect system. Students, in Year 10 and 11 enjoy the responsibilities of the prefect role and show very mature attitudes to caring for and supporting other students.
168. The teacher for citizenship is providing very good subject leadership and is making a significant contribution to the quality of teaching and students' achievement. A good citizenship curriculum with appropriate resources has been introduced across the school covering the key aspects of the citizenship Programmes of Study and this is linked well with the school's overall personal, social and health education programme. In supporting the teaching of citizenship, all teachers have also received training and guidance. Clear and relevant priorities for improving provision for citizenship and raising students' achievement have been identified. Moving these priorities forward could, however, be constrained by the lack of opportunities that are currently available for the teacher to work alongside colleagues to monitor the teaching and share effective practice.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	5
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	3

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