

INSPECTION REPORT

OAKLANDS SCHOOL

Old Bethnal Green Road, London

LEA area: Tower Hamlets, London

Unique reference number: 100972

Headteacher: Ms J Dibb

Lead inspector: Mrs S R Richardson

Dates of inspection: 13 to 16 October 2003

Inspection number: 258717

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:	11-16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	597
School address:	Old Bethnal Green Road London
Postcode:	E2 6PR
Telephone number:	020 7613 1014
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Peter Sherratt
Date of previous inspection:	14 September 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Oaklands School, recently designated as a specialist science school, is considerably smaller than the average secondary comprehensive school. It is situated in an area of high-density housing and many families are socially disadvantaged. Over two-thirds of the pupils are eligible for free school meals. Attainment on entry is below the national average. Almost one-third of the pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs and there are several pupils with severe physical handicaps. The school's population is culturally and ethnically diverse, with the smallest ethnic group being white. The largest ethnic group in the school is of Bangladeshi origin and many of these pupils speak Bengali or Sylheti at home. There is a significant minority of mixed race pupils. Over half the pupils speak English as an additional language and many of these pupils speak two, three and even four languages fluently, including English. There are very few pupils at an early stage of learning English. The number of pupils with statements of special educational need is over twice the national average. Several of these pupils have significant physical difficulties. The school has received a School Achievement Award in 2001 and 2002 for improvements in performance.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1038	Mrs Sylvia Richardson	Lead inspector	French Spanish Personal, social and health education Special educational needs
9163	Mr Geoffrey Humphrey	Lay inspector	
19530	Ms Jennifer Bray	Team inspector	Geography Citizenship
14490	Ms Susan Jackson	Team inspector	History
15198	Sr Marcellina Cooney	Team inspector	Religious education
12121	Mr Jack Mallinson	Team inspector	English Drama Media Literacy
13067	Mr Alan Quinn	Team inspector	Science
15706	Mr Roger Crocker	Team inspector	Information and communication technology (ICT) Music
15312	Ms Kay Lord	Team inspector	Physical education
7636	Mr Anil Sinha	Team inspector	English as an additional language Bengali
32251	Mr Peter Bratton	Team inspector	Mathematics
2971	Ms Kathy Hooper	Team inspector	Design and technology
4696	Mr John Bowden	Team inspector	Art

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

HOW SUCCESSFUL THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school, working very hard to provide for all equally effectively. Its ethnic diversity is a great strength, with pupils of Bangladeshi origin, especially the girls, achieving particularly well. Results in GCSE are above the national average, because the school adds substantial value to pupils' learning, especially in Years 10 and 11. Teaching is good overall and there are some excellent features. The headteacher is an excellent leader, very well supported both by governors and her leadership teams. They ensure that the school provides excellent value for money. The school plays a leading role in the educational community, with parents and local and national business. There is very good potential for continued improvement and growth in this reflective and self-critical school.

THE SCHOOL'S MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

These issues, both strengths and weaknesses, are all included in the school's development plan.

- The head's excellent leadership has established an atmosphere in which pupils and teachers want to achieve well, and are committed to effective learning.
- Standards in GCSE examinations have, as a result, risen steadily in the last four years and are now well above those of similar schools and above the average of all schools nationally.
- The school has developed excellent relationships with the wider community and other schools that support, for example, an enhanced curriculum and access to major companies in the City of London. This provision raises pupils' aspirations and achievement.
- The school analyses its strengths and weaknesses very well and uses information about pupils' progress to assist their development and success.
- Homework, a concern raised by some parents, is unsatisfactory in several subjects, although there is good practice on which to build in English, music and ICT.
- The most able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged to achieve highly enough and to develop their learning skills fully: they are not always independent enough in research and private study.
- Marking pupils' work in ways that help them to improve is not sufficiently consistent across all subjects.
- There is insufficient use of computers to assist learning in science, history, religious education, geography, European languages and art.

There has been very good improvement since the last inspection, especially in standards and achievement, teaching and learning and leadership. The school has made substantial improvements in relation to all the key issues raised in the last inspection report, although it still does not meet statutory requirements for providing a daily act of collective worship for all. Some accommodation problems remain, although many have been resolved.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Performance	compared with:				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
Ave total GCSE points score per pupil	2000	2001	2002	2002	well above average A
	D	C	B	A*	above average B
					average C
					below average D
					well below average E

By the end of Year 9, pupils' achievement has improved but results are still below the national average in the national test. By the end of Year 11, progress has accelerated and standards in GCSE examinations are above the national average. The best results were in English language, English literature, drama and information and communications technology (ICT). There was weak performance in 2002 in music and geography, but both improved significantly in 2003. Results in Spanish remained low. Overall achievement develops steadily as a result of generally good teaching and pupils' very good attitudes to work. In comparison with similar schools, performance by 16 year olds is very high, in the top five per cent compared with similar schools.

THE ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL

Attitudes and behaviour	Very good. Pupils are committed to the school and share its aspirations for their success. Relationships are harmonious and pupils are considerate and polite.
Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development	Very good overall. The school respects the individual spirituality and cultures of the individual. Its moral code is firmly embedded in the daily life of the school. Social skills are enhanced by broadly based learning opportunities.
Attendance	Good. It is above the national average as a result of rigorous procedures and cooperation from pupils and parents.

THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

Teaching and learning	Good. Although a small proportion of lessons is unsatisfactory, reflecting the staffing problems with which the school has coped well, teaching overall is good, with a significant proportion which is very good. This results in pupils being interested in their lessons and learning well.
Curriculum	Very good. The school has found inventive solutions to the problems of provision which it faces because of its small size by working out-of-school hours, and timetabling flexibly to use staff well.
Care, welfare and support	Very good. Academic and personal support, of high quality, is well matched to their needs.

The partnership between the school and parents is very good and they are kept well informed about their children's progress and attainment. The involvement with the wider community and other schools is excellent.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership	Very good overall, with excellent leadership from the headteacher. The governing body gives a very strong and supportive steer on strategic planning. The head is very well supported by her leadership team.
Management	Very good. Excellent financial management and application of the principles of best value ensure that the school meets its strategic objectives. The school monitors performance thoroughly and uses data very well. Staff professional development is sharply focused on raising standards. Funding for ICT is above the national average and government targets are being met earlier than expected.

WHAT PARENTS AND PUPILS FEEL ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Parents: Parents value the school's efforts on their children's behalf and support its work. They are particularly appreciative of the way in which the school tries to understand and meet the needs of families and individual pupils. They were critical about the lack of homework.

Pupils: Pupils feel that their teachers value their opinions and there are good opportunities for them to influence the way the school is organised. They are sensitive to racial harassment and bullying and very confident about how the school deals with these issues.

WHAT THE SCHOOL SHOULD DO TO IMPROVE

- Develop the quality of written feedback to pupils on their work, in order to help them further. Teachers should mark work in ways that make clear to pupils what they must do next.
- Implement and monitor the school's homework policy, so that all pupils receive work that is well constructed and relevant to their classroom studies and courses.
- Review the ways in which the most able pupils are helped to achieve their potential in all subjects.
- Accelerate the programme of ICT training for teachers in order to support learning better in some areas of the curriculum.

Important matters where the school does not comply with statutory requirements:

- The provision of a collective act of worship each day, and religious education for all in Year 11;
- In design and technology, the curriculum does not fully comply with all national requirements because the accommodation restricts the teaching of certain strands of the National Curriculum.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards are below national expectations when pupils reach the end of Year 9 and accelerate during Years 10 and 11 so that GCSE examination results are well above average for schools with similar intakes and above the national average. This indicates that the school helps pupils to make very good progress. However, it is important to point out that, with the small numbers of pupils in each year group, the under-performance of only one or two pupils can make a significant percentage difference in results.

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

Standards in:	School results:	National results
English	31.5	33
Mathematics	31.7	34.5
Science	30.6	32.9

There were 120 pupils in the year group.

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

	School results:	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	57% (60% in 2003)	50%
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	98% (98% in 2003)	91%
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	100% (100% in 2003)	96%
Average points score per pupil	43.1 (46.5 in 2003)	39.8

There were 120 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments.

In national tests at the age of 14 and in GCSE examinations at the age of 16, the trend of improvement over the last five years has been faster than the trend nationally.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's systematic approach to planning for consistent year on year improvement in results adds value to pupils' achievements.
- Results in GCSE examinations in 2003, with 60 per cent of pupils attaining A* to C grades in at least five of their subjects, were above the national average, as they were in 2002.
- Results showed continuing improvement in 2003 in English, English literature, mathematics, drama, information and communications technology (ICT) and design and technology (DT).
- Pupils from all ethnic groups make good progress as they go through the school, but white boys improve least. Girls of Bangladeshi origin do particularly well by the time they reach GCSE, out-performing all other groups in the school.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

- The small number of pupils at an early stage in learning English make very good progress and can quickly join in with the general work of their classes.
- Results in European languages have been poor for several years now.
- There is insufficient routine challenge for the most able pupils, with the result that they do not necessarily gain as many A* and A grades as they might, although they perform well in comparison with pupils at similar schools.

Commentary

1. At the time of the last inspection, standards required substantial improvement. The school is now in the top five per cent of schools at GCSE in achieving grades of A* to G, when judged in relation to pupils' prior attainment and to schools with similar intakes. It is notable, for example, that in 2003 all pupils with statements of special educational needs achieved at least five GCSE passes. Much of the school's improvement is due to good teaching overall, pupils' very good attitudes to learning and self-improvement and the longer-term effects of good management and planning at departmental level.
2. The overall trend of improvement in the school's average National Curriculum points score for all core subjects was faster than the national trend. The school has set and met its ambitious targets for improvement in recent years, and the targets feature strongly in departmental planning to improve performance in subjects. This is one of the reasons why the steady improvement in Years 7 to 9 accelerates to fast improvement in Years 10 and 11.
3. In all three core subjects, English, mathematics and science, results have improved. Pupils attain above average standards in drama, Bengali, English literature and design and technology. Results in music and geography, which have been low, improved in 2003. Results in Spanish, low for several years, remained well below average in 2003, although work seen in lessons and in students' books shows significant improvement in their standards in recent months.
4. By the end of Year 9, when pupils are tested, results show significant improvement on earlier achievement. Bearing in mind the intake performance and the very high number of pupils with English as an additional language, this is a good outcome. There is variation between subjects however: results were almost equal in 2002, and are now slightly better in mathematics than in English. In both, performance at levels 6, 7 and beyond is below the national average. Science, on the other hand, is in line with national averages in both levels 5 and 6, but no pupils were entered for level 7 in 2002 or 2003. The school plans to provide this opportunity in 2004. Both boys' and girls' attainment at the end of Year 9 in all core subjects was still below the national average in 2002; there was little overall difference in the performance of boys and girls.
5. By the time that pupils reach the end of Year 11 and take their GCSE and GNVQ examinations, the trend of improvement in their results has accelerated and they leave the school with above average achievement. This is the case whether they are compared with all schools nationally or just with schools with similar intakes, indicating that they have made very good progress throughout Years 10 and 11.
6. There has clearly been a turnaround in performance since 1999. Compared with pupils' prior attainment and with schools with similar intakes, the school is now in the top 5 per cent for performance and very few pupils leave without some examination successes. This is a remarkable achievement that has received national recognition by a Schools Achievement Award. The upward trend has been clear for six years now, with the school moving from 24.8 per cent of pupils achieving five or more A* to C in 1998 by large steps to 60 per cent of pupils gaining these higher grades in 2003. The jump between 2001 and 2002 was particularly large. Girls attain better results than do the boys overall, with Bangladeshi girls achieving the best results. However, the gap between the results achieved by boys and girls is less than that seen nationally. The lowest performing ethnic group is the white boys. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, and in 2003, all left with examination successes, with at least five passes at A* to G levels.

7. The school is managing to enable effective and successful participation by pupils with slower 'start rates' arising from their lower levels of prior learning, or because they experience difficulties with English which is not the language of their homes, or because they have special educational needs. For example, the results for pupils from ethnic minority groups show a consistent pattern of development. Bangladeshi girls are the highest performing pupils in the school, and white boys the lowest. Bangladeshi girls outperformed their white counterparts, achieving GCSE points above the national average and above those of their Bangladeshi male peers. Even amongst the lowest attaining pupils, it remains the case that pupils – both boys and girls - of Bangladeshi origin perform better than their white counterparts. The school has undertaken detailed research, aided by outside bodies of national repute, to ascertain what further measures they can take to improve the performance of the white minority pupils.
8. There is some variation in the quality of results obtained by each subject when analysed by gender. For example, girls do better in dual award science (by 16%) and in design and technology (by 20%) than the national average performance for girls in those subjects. Girls do markedly worse in Spanish than girls generally in maintained schools (by 40%) but they get better results than the national average for girls in A* and B grades in Bengali. Boys do significantly less well than boys nationally in art and design (by 20%) and in Spanish (by 24%) but they do significantly better than boys nationally in double award science (by 14%).
9. The latest year for which results can be compared with national averages was in 2002, when the picture was as below. Results in geography and music improved significantly in 2003, and the overall trend of steady improvement continued.

SUBJECT	COMMENTARY	% A* - C COMPARED TO NATIONAL AVERAGE (SCHOOL/NATIONAL)
Art and design	Results were in line with national averages but below average at A* and A	62.9 / 65.3
Combined science – dual award	Results were above average at A and B grades. No pupils were unclassified, and all passed at one of grades A* to G. Pupils average points score was above the national average.	65.4 / 50.2
Design and technology	Above average at A*, A and B grades and all pupils received a pass grade.	63.7 / 51.6
Drama	All pupils achieved at least an A-G pass and a high proportion achieved A and B grades.	71.4 / 69.3
English/English Language	Results were about average in A* and A grades and all pupils achieved at least an A-G pass.	58.1 / 57.4
English literature	Above average representation of A* grades. A high proportion of the year group entered.	62.9 / 62.4
Geography	Results were significantly weaker than other subjects, with no representation of A and A* grades, and much lower rates of passes at B and C.	17.4 / 56.3
History	Below average results in grades A* to C, and below average overall.	41.7 / 58.3
Information and communication technology	Good representation of A and B grades, and all entered achieving at least a D grade. Results are well above the national average.	84.6 / 56.3
Mathematics	Lower representation of A*, A and B grades than English or science. Above average performance at C grade assures the overall picture is well above average.	43.7 / 49.7
Music	Reasonable number of candidates entered but no success at A* and A grades and limited at B. Majority of candidates cluster at D/E boundary. Very significantly weaker than other subjects.	5 / 67.4
Other languages	Includes several languages of the home. Results in Bengali were in line with national averages in 2003. Smaller numbers of pupils take other languages.	61.7 / 70.2

PE / Sports Studies	Results are in line with the national average with heavy concentration at grades B, C and D.	55.9 / 54.2
Spanish	Low attainment overall. There were no A*, A or B grade passes. C grades are also below the national average for Spanish.	15.4 / 49.8

10. In lessons, pupils' concentration ensured that they completed significant amounts of work in all subjects except religious education. Analysis of a large sample of work showed that most pupils present their work well and they write fluently, especially when they are invited to make a case to support a finding or an opinion. In English, mathematics and science, standards and achievement were good, with pupils learning well, especially in the light of their starting points.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' very good attitudes to learning contribute to the outstanding ethos of the school and its sense of purpose. This ethos underpins pupils' understanding and tolerance of each other. Pupils are encouraged to be reflective about their behaviour and to help each other to understand the impact of their actions on their achievement.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships are excellent, with a high degree of racial harmony.
- Pupils and teachers take very seriously their responsibilities to the community of the school with the result that all feel at ease at school.
- Opportunities for spiritual development have significantly improved.
- Moral, social and cultural development are very good.
- Attendance is above average.
- There is a low percentage of fixed-term exclusions and there have been no permanent exclusions in recent years.

Commentary

11. In lessons, around the school and in recreation times, pupils are considerate to each other and to adults with whom they work. They share facilities well and work and play together in harmony. There is an atmosphere of friendly competition in many lessons, which is helpful to pupils in their learning. This does not in any way stigmatise pupils who find learning difficult, as the element of mutual support is also strong. The relatively large number of pupils with a statement of special educational need, including those in wheelchairs, benefits from on-going support and help from others.
12. In discussion with inspectors, pupils themselves highlighted their belief that this is a school in which relationships are very good, leading to lower levels of racism than in society in general, and high levels of acceptance of diversity. They described the pupils and staff as welcoming the principles of an inclusive society. This description was borne out by inspection evidence which found pupils' awareness of racism and bullying to be at an advanced stage of development, resulting in their working well with staff to deal with these phenomena. Pupils' willingness to take responsibility within the school is another factor influencing the ethos evident in all year groups.
13. Pupils, especially girls, grow in confidence as learners as they progress through the school. The oldest pupils are clear in their analysis of their own learning needs and how best to meet them. They accept that the school's high expectations of behaviour and a community dealing effectively with any form of harassment are part of the reason for their success, so few resist the school's rules and codes of conduct. In lessons, behaviour is often very good and with only rare exceptions, generally good, showing the practical outcomes of a well-rehearsed policy on behaviour and being a member of this learning community.
14. Pupils' self-knowledge and spiritual awareness are also a very good feature of the school. There are many opportunities for informal discussions and for formal debate, and pupils take full advantage of them in lessons such as personal and social education and citizenship classes,

and through their active participation in the school council or as 'seniors'. Opportunities for spiritual development were criticised in the last inspection, but teachers' plans now take very good account of the need to support pupils' spiritual development. Texts are well chosen and explore belief and faith sensitively. Uniform, the timing of clubs and the nature of out-of-school activities for example, all reflect the respect that staff and pupils share for cultural traditions. In citizenship classes, pupils of all ethnic groups, both boys and girls, and those with special educational needs ask and answer questions and probe carefully into some difficult issues. The school reciprocates very well when pupils raise issues with the headteacher or other senior managers, and provides opportunities for pupils to participate in further development of their ideas and contribute to policy making. Staff do not believe that they have completed the changes which are necessary to enable all pupils to develop spiritually and show tolerance and respect, but they have made great advances, and the school ethos is imbued with the determination to continue to develop appropriately. The extensive links with City of London business also enhance the ways in which pupils in a multi-cultural community can see avenues for personal and career development clearly.

15. Attendance is above average and there is only a small number of fixed-term exclusions. Procedures for these are clear and are well followed. Parents support the school well in ensuring that absence is followed up. The work of the home/school liaison officer is particularly helpful in explaining to parents their duties in ensuring that absence is genuine and good attendance is important.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	7	School data	0.9
National data	7.8	National data	1.2

Exclusions

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	158	5	0
White – Irish	2	0	0
White – any other White background	8	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	21	1	0
Mixed – White and Black African	11	1	0
Mixed – White and Asian	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	5	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	308	19	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	16	1	0
Black or Black British – African	13	2	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1	0	0
Chinese	8	0	0

Any other ethnic group	26	0	0
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The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. There were some examples of excellent teaching and many lessons contained features which were very good, for example in terms of the ways in which teachers motivated pupils and succeeded in engaging them in debate and discussion. Most teachers know how to manage pupils' behaviour well and create a stimulating and enjoyable atmosphere for learning. The small number of unsatisfactory lessons can be explained by the fact that some of these teachers were very new to the school and its pupils, and others were less careful than the majority in following the school's recommendations about setting and marking homework, and in matching the pace of the lesson to pupils' learning needs.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good overall.
- Pupils are encouraged constantly to do as well as they can, and they respond well to this encouragement.
- Teachers insist on high standards of behaviour and have a consistent approach to improving behaviour through their teaching.
- Teaching assistants make very good contributions to pupils' learning and support teachers well.
- Teachers are constantly aware of the need to ensure equality of opportunity and work hard to ensure that all pupils can benefit from their teaching.
- Pupils' opportunities to learn independently are only satisfactory in a significant minority of lessons. The use of ICT in particular is not consistently developed.
- In some lessons, the most able students are not sufficiently challenged.
- Written feedback to pupils from their teachers as to how they can improve their work is not as consistent and supportive as is their spoken feedback. As a result, pupils do not always know how best to improve their work. Marking in some subjects does not follow school guidelines.

Commentary

16. The ethos of the school, whose motto is 'A Learning Community', underpins the pupils' learning. There is a clear expectation that all pupils are in school to work hard and learn well throughout the school. The tone is one of courtesy between adults and adult to pupil, so that mutual respect is a feature of the classrooms. As a result, the vast majority of pupils accept the school's codes and respond to each other with appropriate support and interest. Teachers and pupils alike are committed to the same learning objectives. This harmonious approach owes much to the leadership and priorities both of the school as a whole and within individual subjects.
17. Teaching is most consistent in English, Bengali, ICT, art, personal and social education and design and technology. The best individual examples of teaching of excellence were in mathematics, English and design and technology. A small number of lessons were unsatisfactory, for the reasons set out below, in mathematics, science, geography, history and physical education.
18. Teachers plan their lessons well to include all pupils in the learning. Objectives are clearly stated and shared with pupils, so that they know what is expected of them in the short and medium term. Because teachers know their pupils well, teaching is appropriately pitched for most. However, there is sometimes insufficient challenge to enable the most able pupils to go on to more sophisticated work. Teachers use a range of methods and materials as additional stimuli, and give freely of their time for after-school clubs and out of school hours activities to support learning. They are ambitious for their pupils' success and help them to aspire to high achievement. This is evident from the effort made by all staff to present the school well, keep it clean, bright and attractive and display many examples of pupils' work as models towards which all pupils can aspire.

19. The teaching of English language including literacy, and of mathematics and numeracy is generally good. The school has a long history of promoting the skills of literacy, before the National Literacy Strategy was introduced. Weaker pupils get extra tuition in progress groups and all are helped by the well-developed school literacy policy. Provision for improving the skills of numeracy is less highly developed than for literacy but there is good evidence of numeracy skills being used relevantly in subjects such as science and technology.
20. In the classroom, the features of the good, very good and excellent teaching and learning were these:
- Teachers try to ensure that pupils formulate their own opinions and give them opportunities for discussion and debate, within an atmosphere where everyone's opinion is valued. This approach was very successful in a Year 11 English poetry lesson which gave pupils the opportunity to work in groups and present their ideas to the class as a whole
 - Hard work and concentration, producing high rates of coverage of the material in hand, are very generally evident.
 - Opportunities for research, which although rare, help high ability pupils to extend their knowledge, skills and understanding of the topic, for example in a Year 9 lesson on the Kobe earthquake.
 - Special support for gifted and talented pupils through extra, more probing questions and applications, deepen their understanding of topics they are studying, for example in a Year 7 mathematics lesson using decimals within the Dewey classification system in the library. This is also a good demonstration of how the school is working with the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies to improve learning.
 - Close attention to the requirements of the GCSE examination, focusing on how to achieve good results in high value questions, for example in a design and technology class in Year 11, results in the teaching challenging pupils' ideas and earlier work.
 - Confident subject knowledge enabled the teacher to plan well and use a range of styles, as in a Year 10 physical education lesson which included individual tasks, a video and other well chosen resources.
 - Teachers' enthusiasm for their subjects led to pupils developing and maintaining strong interest and contributed to their success in learning.
 - Good structure to the lesson, so that nothing was rushed but a productive pace was maintained, for example in a Year 8 PSHE lesson, where very great sensitivity to a multi-faith and multi-cultural class enabled all to participate in work on the topic of friendship
 - The very valuable support given to classes by teaching assistants helps both pupils with special educational needs and others to work well and learn.

Example of outstanding practice in teaching

This lesson exemplifies how grammar points and language development can be promoted whilst providing stimulating materials and engaging Year 11 pupils in the creative side of modern English literature.

Teaching is highly focused, with no time wasted – every word counts. The teacher inspires and motivates pupils by offering ideas on the text whilst giving scope for them to interpret the poem (Armitage's *Hitcher*) themselves. She knows the class well and groups and regroups them adroitly to get the best possible learning outcomes.

There is variety and pace in the lesson with very good use of extension materials leading to appropriate homework for all. So, the learning is excellent too, because pupils are clear on what is expected of them and can plan their own responses. They are required to think for themselves as well as learn from each other. The spirituality of poetry is also well demonstrated: pupils have to understand the morality of an outsider.

21. In unsatisfactory lessons, the features were:
- Unsatisfactory application of the school's behaviour code by teachers unfamiliar with the classes, resulting in a loss of focus and pace to the lesson and frustration for the teacher because of pupils' chatter and lack of concentration.
 - Lack of clarity about the main objective for learning, so that pupils are sometimes unclear about how to prepare and focus their work.

- Lack of consistency in marking pupils' work and giving them feedback to help them improve.
- An over-emphasis on learning facts rather than understanding and applying them.
- Some lack of challenge for the most able.
- The teaching of ICT is generally good in its own subject lessons, teaching is challenging and supports individual learning (especially in Years 10 and 11). However, in a number of other subjects where its applications should be practised, there is little activity. There is insufficient use of ICT in Spanish and French, science, art, religious education, history and geography.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 104 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
3 (2.9%)	21 (20%)	39 (37.5%)	32 (30.8%)	8 (7.7%)	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.

The curriculum

The school provides a broad curriculum, which is enriched by an excellent out of hours programme and good extra-curricular provision. Resources are good. The school has been inventive in terms of the use and improvement of accommodation. The school buildings are well maintained and provide a pleasant environment for learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is appropriate for the aptitudes, interests and aspirations of the great majority of pupils.
- The curriculum is enhanced by an excellent out of school hours programme.
- There is an outstanding range of extra-curricular activities.
- Pupils do not benefit from the full range of design and technology experiences, because accommodation for DT is so restricted.
- There are overall weaknesses in the provision for musical education, and for religious education in Year 11.
- The use of ICT is inconsistent across the curriculum.

Commentary

22. The range of curricular opportunities is good overall with some features which are very good and some which are excellent. Throughout the school the curriculum provides a broad and balanced education.
23. In Years 7 to 9, the National Curriculum is enhanced by drama and by the addition of Bengali in Year 8. The provision for modern foreign languages has recently been diversified as two tutor groups now study French in Year 7 and two study Spanish. Reading lessons are available for all as part of a timetabled programme of study skills improvement – this provision has been in place for many years and has been well integrated into the school's response to the National Literacy Strategy. The school has been a pilot for the national strategies in English and mathematics, which has influenced teaching and learning across the curriculum. Such provision supports all pupils well, but in particular, the booster and other extra classes help pupils with special educational needs or limited earlier educational opportunities (for example recent asylum seekers or refugees).

24. In Years 10 and 11, provision is now in place to create opportunities for pupils to study two foreign languages, Spanish and French, at GCSE level, but there are as yet no pupils choosing to study two European languages. A GCSE course in Bengali is also available and is very popular. Three separate GCSE science courses are taught to higher attaining pupils as a major strand in the provision the school makes for these pupils. A vocational course in ICT was introduced in 2002 with very good results so far. A GNVQ course in Leisure and Tourism was introduced in 2003 and it recruited satisfactorily. Options in design and technology and media studies are particularly popular at GCSE. Provision for design and technology throughout the school is limited to the study of resistant materials. In Year 11, current option choices restrict approximately half of the pupils from following a course in religious education and this breaches statutory requirements.
25. The overall provision for personal, social and health education is good. This is an important improvement since the time of the last inspection, when provision was criticised. The provision for citizenship education is also good.
26. The provision for out of hours learning is excellent. Many departments offer intervention programmes after school and at lunch times to help pupils to advance their work in particular subjects. The formal taught curriculum is enhanced by an impressive variety of enrichment opportunities and extra-curricular clubs. The sports department provides a range of sporting fixtures for all pupils. The contribution of music to the cultural life of the school is below expectations, for example, pupils rarely get the opportunity to perform or to engage in external musical activities. There are only limited opportunities presented for pupils to learn to play instruments through the use of visiting specialists. There is also scope for the profile of drama to be enhanced through greater whole school participation, although drama option courses are popular and pupils achieve well. More positively, the school fosters a particular interest in poetry writing and in art and design. Displays throughout the school provide models to which pupils can aspire, and serve to celebrate ethnic diversity. Most departments offer an interesting programme of external visits to enhance the curriculum across the age range.
27. Work experience placements are arranged on an individual basis for pupils in Years 10 and 11. Pupils are encouraged to aspire to high achievement and the school works hard to interest pupils in continuing their education at university. An active partnership with the City branch of a worldwide investment bank does much to enrich the quality of work experience and to extend learning opportunities, specifically through regular reading groups and Saturday morning seminars held at their City offices, which are highly motivating to pupils and much appreciated.
28. The curriculum is continually reviewed and developed. Teachers have the opportunity to contribute to curriculum reviews by raising issues and attending committee meetings, which are open to all. Strategies for promoting pupils' literacy skills are in place, but the school recognises the need to develop these further. In some, but not all, subjects the use of homework successfully extends pupils' learning. There is sufficient good practice in the better arrangements, in English and ICT for example, to ensure that other subjects also use homework more effectively.
29. Across the school, classroom resources are good, although access to ICT is limited in some subjects. The booking system to make available computer suites acts for some teachers as a deterrent to routine activities involving computers, and this in turn limits, for example, extension work for the highest attaining pupils. The library is a well-used and effective resource. There are very good specialist facilities in science and drama. The school has sought to address limitations in classroom accommodation through the innovative timetabling of after-school lessons. These limitations, however, continue adversely to affect the curriculum in design and technology, which is restricted as to which specialist areas it can teach in the accommodation available.

30. The school has recently acquired specialist status as a science college, and this is enabling the school to look again at how and how well it provides a full and relevant science education for all pupils. There are plans at a very early stage to undertake shared sixth form provision with two local schools and the school has embarked upon some AS and A-level work on a franchised basis.

Care, guidance and support

Care, guidance and support are very good overall with some features which are excellent. Pupils are very well supported and provided with very good advice and guidance. Pupils' views are valued and there are many opportunities for them to contribute to the work of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is excellent management of all health and safety procedures and child protection is very good.
- The quality of pastoral care afforded to pupils is very good.
- The advice and guidance provided to pupils is also very good.
- The value placed on the views and opinions of pupils motivates and engages them.
- The quality of the relationships between staff and pupils is a feature of an outstanding school ethos.

Commentary

31. Those involved in implementing health and safety procedures are diligent and trained to a very high standard. Risk assessment procedures, supporting documentation and the communication of the latest requirements to all concerned are exemplary. Child protection procedures are very good. The pastoral care afforded to pupils is sensitively matched to the ethnic and cultural diversity of the school population.
32. Pupils are very well supported and provided with very good advice and guidance by a dedicated tutorial team. A wide reaching programme of mentoring, including a specially trained learning mentor, and an effective personal, social and health education programme enhance pupils' ability to learn. There is a whole school ethos that focuses on the needs of individual pupils and ensures that any barriers to effective learning are addressed so that pupils are able to concentrate on achieving to the best of their ability. In discussion with inspectors, pupils spoke very warmly of the support they receive and the fair and inclusive ways they are treated and encouraged to develop.
33. The quality of the relationships between pupils, and between staff and pupils, is very good. The views and opinions of the pupils are valued and acted upon. This is a feature of the school that is a particular strength: pupils have easy and direct access to senior staff who are all very visible around the school. They can and do air their views on a wide range of issues through their representatives on the school council and through their tutors. There is a high level of trust between the pupils, teachers and other members of staff.
34. There are very good, and well-established, procedures for the induction of new pupils when they transfer from the feeder primary schools, or join the school at other times. Pupils receive very good guidance when the time comes for them to move on to further education. There are also excellent opportunities for pupils to gain a knowledge and understanding of business and the wider commercial community.
35. Assessment of pupils' progress is generally good with some aspects that are very good. For example, the way in which pupils with statements of special educational needs are monitored and provision is made for them is very good. The work of teaching assistants in the classroom, who generally are well aware of the class teacher's learning objectives and plans, is very

effective in promoting pupils' learning and assessing the form the support should take to have most impact. Teaching assistants are often very skilful in ensuring that the pupils with whom they are working are fully engaged and motivated by their tasks, and understand exactly how to make progress.

36. Care and support for pupils with special educational needs is generally discreet, ensuring that they become more independent. Those who have physical, including serious movement and speech problems, are fully included in the life of the school. Pupils who have special gifts or talents are also monitored carefully but they do not always receive sufficient challenge to develop their skills of analysis and research to go beyond the work undertaken by other pupils. The feedback they receive on their written work is good in some subjects, but insufficiently detailed to provide them with guidance on where to turn their attention next, such as through further reading and research.
37. Parents are fully involved in a thorough process of reviewing and understanding their children's statements of special educational need. All statutory requirements are met. Frequent contact with the home ensures that parents can support their child's learning well. Individual education plans are generally helpful in this regard, but there is insufficient contribution from subject teachers towards the task of making both statements and learning plans immediately relevant to the adaptation of the different programmes of study needed in each classroom. The links between the learning staff and subjects are not sufficiently tight to ensure that in all subjects programmes of study are appropriate.
38. The care which the school provides to support pupils' learning area was described as quite strong in the last inspection, but it has improved exponentially since that time.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The partnership between the school and parents is very good and they are kept well informed about their children's progress and attainment. The involvement with the wider community and other schools is excellent.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are excellent links with feeder primary and all secondary schools within the education authority.
- Excellent relationships within the wider community enhance the learning and awareness of pupils and help raise their aspirations.
- The working partnerships between the school and pupils' families support learning very well.
- Termly progress reports and regular bilingual newsletters keep parents well informed.

Commentary

39. The partnership between the school and parents is very good. Parents receive a progress report every term prior to the review meeting. The content of these reports includes a statement on attainment matched to National Curriculum levels, plus grades for effort, homework completed and behaviour. The written summary is succinct but this is expanded verbally during discussion with the tutor when interpreters are made available for those parents who are not fully proficient in English. Targets for future learning are included in these discussions. This format for reporting progress is well matched to the individual needs of parents. A full-time community liaison officer who has command of four Asian languages and an in-depth knowledge of the needs of the Bangladeshi community served by the school very well supports the relationships between the tutorial team and parents. As a result of his efforts, mothers from the Bangladeshi community were comfortable in coming into the school to talk to inspectors and parents volunteered to act as translators in the pre-inspection parents' meeting, so that all could participate and convey their views.

40. Oaklands School has excellent links with the wider community that have been developed and extended over a number of years. One outstanding example is the relationship between the school and the London City branch of a world-wide investment bank. The bank supports pupils' learning by providing Saturday morning study and revision skills classes at the bank's premises and helping with the funding of study weekends and revision booklets. The bank also helps to raise the aspirations of pupils by providing mentors, inviting pupils into the work place and providing bursaries for research projects aimed at raising achievement.
41. The school has excellent links with other schools and these lead to the provision of very good extended services and educational support programmes, benefiting pupils and professional development of staff. For example, Oaklands is part of the Tower Hamlets 'Excellence in Cities' partnership and collaborates with the network of secondary schools on a wealth of issues. Oaklands is also part of a five-school consortium of 'Advanced Schools' attracting special funding to support the remaining ten secondary schools in the borough. This support includes the organisation of joint planning and management initiatives, joint training programmes, sharing best practice and providing conferences on topics of mutual interest. The school is also part of an international research project led in the UK by Cambridge University to look at 'leadership for learning' with universities and schools throughout Europe and America.
42. The links with local primary schools are also very strong. For example, Year 9 pupils at Oakland's mentor Year 6 pupils at Lawdale Primary, the main feeder school. Oaklands provides Lawdale pupils with French tuition, science 'master classes' and the support of the community liaison officer to work with pupils' families. An Oakland's teacher is also the 'Schools Sports Co-ordinator' for a group of local primary schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the headteacher is excellent and it is supported by the very good work of the governors. The leadership provided by other key staff and the effectiveness of management are all very good.

Strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides excellent vision and leadership for the school community
- There is excellent strategic financial planning and management
- The governors provide a very good and supportive steer for the leadership teams
- The school has a very strong culture of reflection, self-evaluation and monitoring of its performance against strategic goals
- Staff professional development is sharply focused on the raising of achievement through the sharing of good practice
- There is no daily collective act of worship

Commentary

43. The governors are very strongly committed to the vision and values of the school, which emphasise an inclusive learning community that values and respects all its members and celebrates diversity. Their strategic thinking is clearly driven by this ethos. They are well informed and have a very good understanding of the strengths and weakness of the school. They both support and challenge the headteacher and the leadership team, for example, at every stage in the decision making and application process to become a specialist science school and in revising the structure of the school day. They played a pivotal role in deciding the two strategic development priorities in the coming year and ensured that funding was secured. However, their membership does not yet fully reflect the ethnic mix of the community they serve. They fulfil all

their statutory duties well, with the exception of providing a daily collective act of worship, which though more frequent, is still in breach of requirements.

44. The headteacher is an excellent role model for the school's multi-cultural community. She sets herself very challenging targets that are fully supported by the governors. She practises a very open and consultative style of leadership where the voice of each individual is expected to be heard. She is an excellent motivator of staff and pupils and ensures very clear strategic direction for the work of the school and is relentless in her pursuit of a curriculum and enrichment activities that both challenge and support all pupils. The inclusive character of the school is as much due to her leadership and commitment as to all the other factors influencing the school's development.
45. The restructured leadership teams share her commitment to equality of opportunity and to school improvement. Senior staff are open-minded and innovative in their approach to the improvement of teaching and learning and to the care and support of pupils, hence the centrality of raising standards, improving individual performance and making very good provision for all pupils. Members of the teams are supportive of each other and work cooperatively to ensure the effective running of the school on a daily basis. The headteacher talks of leadership teams, rather than a single team, effectively to encourage all staff with delegated responsibilities to work in the same focused way across groups or staff. This results in a high degree of commitment to the school's core values and clear focus on achievement for all.
46. A thorough performance management system is in place. The self-reviews in most departments are well used to diagnose strengths and to establish priorities for improvement. This has been one of the strategies that have resulted in improvements in team effectiveness in subjects and in pastoral care, with benefits to pupils, for example, for those with special educational needs and those who need extra support to achieve their own learning targets.
47. The school has managed well the difficulties of teacher recruitment and retention and there is a very good induction programme for new staff at all levels, which aims to develop their commitment to the school and understanding of its objectives from the outset. Despite the extreme staff recruitment problems experienced in the capital city, through careful management of budgets, this school has suffered from lower rates of turnover than others and has succeeded in keeping staff for longer periods, justifying investment in them. Staff professional development is very sharply focused on raising achievement through the sharing of good practice. Senior managers use data well. There is a large quantity of detailed data on the individual performance of students, including predictors of attainment. Line managers are increasingly using this to the full to set challenging individual targets for pupils, focusing latterly on raising the attainment in Years 7 to 9 more quickly, so that the relatively greater successes in Years 10 and 11 are reflected earlier in the attainment at the end of Year 9.

Financial information

48. There is excellent financial planning and management through the application of the principles of best value. The school has been very successful in securing external funding for a wide range of projects, such as support for extra-curricular activities. Specific grants are very well used to support the work of departments and individual students and the provision is carefully monitored when once in place.
49. Strategies for financial control and administration are efficient and there is tight budgetary supervision. This practice is excellent.
50. Income and expenditure per pupil are above the national average but in line with the averages for London schools, which provide a London allowance to staff. Value for money in terms of the outcomes of all of the financial planning that occurs is excellent.

Example of outstanding practice in management and administration

The management of the school uses business principles to ensure that despite the small size of the school, it enjoys all the skills which would be available to a much larger institution with resulting benefit to pupils.

Excellent financial management and school administration have been very well supported by the training that key staff have undertaken, ensuring that the skills to manage on-going change are in place and are robust enough to meet all challenges. Support systems, rigorously monitored by governors, closely resemble those of a cost-effective successful business, with purposeful talk of re-investment and payback. The school uses many means to ensure that it always obtains good value in its purchasing, so that economies in one area can be redirected to support school priorities in developing learning. It also plans particularly well to invest in the school's resources, accommodation and infrastructure to provide an excellent ethos and very good learning environment.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	3,038,906
Total expenditure	2,784,092
Expenditure per pupil	4,751

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	30,291
Balance carried forward to the next	254,814

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

What is the effectiveness of provision for and standards achieved by pupils from ethnic minority groups?

Provision for pupils from ethnic minority groups is very good. However, it is very important to note that the main minority group in the school is formed of white pupils of English, Scottish, Welsh and Irish heritage. The majority ethnic group is of Bangladeshi heritage. There are no Traveller children on roll.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Bangladeshi girls are the highest performing group in the school.
- Bangladeshi boys perform above the average for their peers in other Tower Hamlets schools and better than the white boys in the school.
- Opportunities are plentiful to ensure that pupils gain the competence and confidence to speak and write English well.
- Parents support their children's learning strongly.

Commentary

51. There is no significant underachievement amongst pupils belonging to minority ethnic communities. In general, the performance of such pupils does not significantly differ from those of others in the school, although there are issues of white underachievement especially among the white boys. In the core subjects, in mathematics and science there are no significant differences in the performance of different ethnic groups. Similarly, while English presents an varied picture of performance between boys and girls and between pupils of different ethnic groups, on the whole, there is no evidence of under-performance by Bangladeshi boys: Bangladeshi girls are the highest performers in the school, outperforming girls in Tower Hamlets as a whole. In other subjects, such as music and French and Spanish, there is no observed difference based on ethnicity – in any year. A similar picture emerges in history and geography. In PSHE and citizenship, the scheme of work is carefully constructed to ensure inclusion of all groups, based both on gender and ethnicity criteria.

52. Among the factors that have contributed to the performance of pupils from ethnic minority communities are:
- Teaching of Bengali and opportunities to take GCSEs in other community languages (for example in Turkish and Arabic) which help to sustain and develop pupils' self-confidence and self-respect;
 - Monitoring to ensure equal opportunities, which includes planning by teachers in their schemes of work for "inclusion" of all pupils during classroom activities and collaborative work; the school analyses pupils' performance very well and comprehensively by both ethnicity and gender;
 - Encouraging participation by all ethnic groups in all out of school hours activities;
 - The provision of 'catch-up' classes, opportunities which take into account English language acquisition;
 - Study support after school, which encourages a high level of attendance by Bangladeshi pupils, leading to the development of learning skills and support for homework and coursework;
 - High level of sensitivity on the part of the school to the cultural requirements of ethnic minority communities, enabling and informing participation;
 - The partnership with a major City banking firm, which includes study days on Saturdays hosted at the firm's offices;
 - Encouraging high academic aspiration (through organised visits to universities, for example);
 - Work of the home and community liaison officer in developing community links and strong partnership with parents. This is a most influential feature of the links between home and school which informs parents and enables them to understand the school's objectives for their children.
53. A good example of the impact of the home and community liaison officer relates to improved school attendance. Through his work in explaining to parents why the school resists long holidays during term time for pupils to visit families in, for example, Bangladesh, pupils have made much better progress towards their examination targets, and achieved higher take-up of further education. Parents also appreciate the ways in which he gives them full access to developments in education practice and will always act as a support when they wish to convey the views of the community to the school.

Progress by Bangladeshi pupils between Key Stage 2 and GCSE (Value-added)

Bangladeshi pupils	KS2 Average Point Score	GCSE Average Point Score	Progress Average Point Score
Oaklands Boys	20.6	34.2	13.6
Tower Hamlets Boys	23.8	33.6	9.8
Oaklands Girls	22.8	43	20.2
Tower Hamlets Girls	23.6	37.3	13.7

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Quality of provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well
- Shared leadership results in consistently high standards of teaching
- Enrichment through activities outside the classroom supports pupils' language development and awareness of literature
- Support for those with learning difficulties and those with English as an additional language is good
- Some lack of opportunity for pupils to think for themselves and discuss their ideas

Commentary

54. By the end of Year 9 standards are just below the national average, but well above those for similar schools. Attainment on entry is well below national expectation, so achievement is good. Pupils are making good progress in their first three years. There is little difference between pupils of different ethnic origin. Girls from all ethnic groups performed better than boys in 2002, but boys caught up in 2003.
55. Standards by the end of Year 11 are in line with the national average. In the GCSE examinations for 2002, girls in the school performed better than the national average for girls; boys were in line with national results for boys, showing marked improvement from the year before. Achievement is good. In 2003 the girls of English, Scottish and Welsh origin performed less well, and Bangladeshi girls better, than the national average for girls, but in general ethnic differences are not significant. All pupils are entered for English language and literature. Results are similar in both examinations, and better than those in mathematics.
56. These results were confirmed by standards observed during the inspection. By the end of Year 9 most pupils are writing fluently, with an accuracy little below national expectations. They handle most punctuation confidently, but spelling is erratic. Basic skills and standards of presentation are much improved by the practice of re-drafting and word-processing. Pupils learn how to examine character in a story, and can use such devices as metaphor, simile and alliteration to enliven their own writing. They use dictionaries and thesauruses to expand their vocabulary. Their poetry is fresh and original.
57. By the end of Year 11 pupils analyse episodes in novels such as *Of Mice and Men*. They comment perceptively on the dramatic structure of *An Inspector Calls*. They can see how the use of short staccato sentences in *Hitcher* conveys violent action, while the long sentences reveal the protagonist's feelings. They use reference books and the Internet to research the social background of *Great Expectations*. Those with special educational needs make good progress guided by sensitive support.
58. Media studies has been recently introduced as a GCSE subject. There are no exam results yet. Standards are at national expectation in Year 11. Essays are accurate, well expressed and fluent. For graphical work the department is waiting for an appropriate programme. Teachers make very good use of information and communication technology to provide guidance on, for instance, designing marketing strategies. In analysing advertisements pupils can distinguish bias, reality and fiction, and apply their knowledge to their own work.

59. Pupils seize opportunities for speaking, either in small groups or in speech-making. Role-play was seen to good effect when pupils entered the mind of a witness to violent assault, who breaks down under questioning by the police. They seldom read aloud in class, and, when they do, they read too fast and without expression. Year 7 pupils borrow widely from the library, boys as much as girls. In later years, the borrowing rate declines, and boys borrow many fewer books than girls. Pupils who speak English as an additional language cope well. Those who speak little on arrival receive very good support and make good progress.
60. Teaching and learning are good in Years 7 to 9 and very good thereafter. No lessons seen were unsatisfactory. Teachers work most effectively as a team, sharing ideas and offering mutual support. They all plan and prepare well, explain objectives clearly, have good subject knowledge, and mark assiduously. They apply the National Literacy Strategy successfully. As a result pupils know what to do, how to do it and how to improve. They are given their current National Curriculum levels and appropriate targets. Teachers all have good control of their classes. They get good results through encouragement and creating an environment in which pupils feel at ease and want to learn. Teachers are aware of those pupils who have special needs and those who speak English as an additional language. They ensure their needs are met by such means as careful explanation of obscure vocabulary or by placing such pupils in groups where other pupils will help. Teachers give pupils precise guidance about how to tackle a topic, but sometimes this becomes too prescriptive, thus restricting pupils' initiative. When pupils are invited to talk they respond animatedly, sharing ideas and taking notes.
61. The department is very well led and well managed, with an emphasis on participation and inclusion. The curriculum is subject to regular evaluation and revision. Meetings are not restricted to administration but often deal with improving practice. Induction of new staff is thorough. The deployment of support staff is effective. Teachers have access to all the data about each pupil's prior attainment. They use this to set targets for individuals and for the department as a whole. Though they arrange many activities outside the classroom to stimulate those who are gifted and talented, there is sometimes insufficient extension work for the most able within the lesson. That said, teachers take pupils to the theatre, arrange reading workshops, and initiate productive links with other schools. The library is a most useful asset. The librarian provides a pleasant and studious environment, encouraging research and taking a lead in lessons.
62. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Standards are now well above those for similar schools, and in GCSE results are now in line with the national average rather than below. Pupils' attitudes are now very good, and teaching is good or better in many more of the lessons. Information and communication technology is well used. Parents are kept informed about their children's progress. Above all, children who enter the school with levels of attainment well below the national average are now leaving with standards in line with the national average. Their achievement is very good.

Language and literacy across the curriculum.

63. Standards are satisfactory. The school was organising in-service training for teachers before the National Literacy Strategy was introduced. As a result there have been several initiatives to improve literacy, such as posters in all classrooms to focus attention on a chosen aspect of literacy, and the provision of help for those most in need. Weaker pupils get extra tuition in progress groups, with special emphasis in science. One most impressive initiative has been the arrangement with a worldwide investment bank's London office, whereby some dozen managers visit the school twice a week to hear pupils read. The library is a welcoming area, very well run, and much used. Girls borrow many more books than boys in all years except Year 7.
64. There is much small-group discussion in all subjects. Speaking and listening are given prominence in physical education, where older pupils coach the younger. In mathematics high standards of writing are required, and in science the skills of note-taking are specifically taught. Most pupils can understand the simpler technical terms used in each subject.

65. However, unsurprisingly in a small school with several one-teacher departments, there is no group of teachers, representing all departments, which could take new ideas on board and disseminate them. As a result departments vary in the extent to which they provide a consistent whole-school approach to improving literacy.

Bengali

Overall the provision for Bengali is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is by a native speaker, who shows enthusiasm for the subject
- Students are motivated and they demonstrate a very positive attitude to the subject
- Pupils make sustained and consistent progress in all years
- Results and standards of performance are consistently good throughout
- Greater variety of activities and resources, including systematic exploitation of ICT, to offer further suitable challenges to all pupils, especially for motivating the less able pupils
- Further strategies to increase the enjoyment of studying Bengali as well as of increasing pupils' independent learning skills

Commentary

66. Results in Bengali compare well with similar schools, with 70 per cent of pupils entered gaining A* to C in 2003 and 100 per cent A* to G. The comparable figures for 2002 are 61.7 per cent and 100 per cent respectively. While this in part is due to pupils' knowledge of a closely related language (Sylheti), their considerable achievement in Bengali is recognised, especially as they study the subject for four (from Year 8) rather than five (from Year 7) years prior to their GCSE.
67. By Year 9, pupils can distinguish between vowels and consonants. They are also becoming increasingly aware of the differences in sound and vocabulary between Sylheti, which they speak at home, and standard Bengali. They can understand the teacher's Bengali spoken at normal speed. They can work collaboratively and work with concentration to complete given tasks. For all groups of pupils, standards in Years 7 to 9 are higher than national expectations, including for pupils with special educational needs.
68. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are higher than the national expectations for modern languages generally. For community languages, however, the standards are in line with national averages, as also reflected in the GCSE results. Girls perform better in Years 10 and 11 (and in GCSE) than boys. There are no significant variations relating to special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language.
69. Pupils in Years 8 and 9 make a good start to their learning of a new alphabet, mastering the shapes and principles of word formation, grasping the phonetic nature of the letters of the alphabet and recognising the complex orthographic behaviours of both vowels and consonants. By the time pupils reach Years 10 and 11, they acquire a firm command of the alphabet of standard Bengali and most are able to read and write with confidence. Most pupils consolidate their grasp of the written standard Bengali. Their spoken Bengali is competent and their awareness of related culture and history matures well. Some of the more able pupils undertake extended writing and research-based work, demonstrating their independent language learning skills and commitment to Bengali. Overall, however, the amount of written work by pupils, in all years, is limited, and confined largely to class work or set homework. Strategies need to be explored to encourage reading for pleasure and for accessing cultural and other information from authentic materials, such as magazines and newspapers.
70. Teaching in Bengali is never less than good. In all years, the teacher's class management is purposeful, which ensures that teaching and learning take place unhindered. Careful planning and commitment in all lessons result in consistent pupil participation. Consistent use of the

target language is beneficial to pupils and it also raises the status of the standard form of the language in the eyes of the pupils. Classroom activities are interesting and relevant, such as choral drills, copying of words and phrases, use of OHP and taped materials, and testing of previously learnt vocabulary. Effective use of assessment and record keeping motivates all pupils and helps the teacher in lesson planning as well as in the choice of activities and materials to suit the learning needs of all pupils. Individual support to pupils keeps all pupils involved in their class activities as well as homework tasks. High teacher expectation, both for behaviour and achievement, acts as encouragement. In Years 10 and 11, teaching is focused on pupils' written work, as most pupils show a mature grasp of spoken standard Bengali.

71. Pupils' attitudes to languages and their associated cultures are generally very positive throughout. They work hard, take care of their work, participate in class activities willingly, and have normally very good relationships with each other and with their teacher. There is a no significant difference in pupils' motivation between Years 7 to 9, and Years 10 and 11. However, in Years 10 and 11, girls are more motivated than boys, a factor also reflected in their relative performance in GCSE.
72. The provision for Bengali in the school has been well maintained since the last inspection. The leadership of this area of languages provision remains effective. Parental support and the senior management's support for the study of this subject clearly contribute to pupils' achievement. Excellent displays demonstrate that both the teacher and pupils take part in a variety of writing exercises, including celebration of festivals and other interesting events. A good start has been made with ICT. The school has recently acquired Bengali fonts, enabling pupils to experiment with Bengali script. However, the difficulties associated with booking computers currently hinder this development.

French and Spanish

Overall, the provision for French and Spanish is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching, from a young and enthusiastic team, is generally good.
- The use of French and Spanish as the main teaching medium gives pupils good opportunities to develop their own language skills.
- The new curriculum is meeting pupils' needs better than was the case in previous years.
- Results at GCSE are well below average, but work currently underway in both key stages shows a better foundation is being laid for future success.
- Teachers' assessments of performance at the end of Year 9 show that pupils' standards are well below average, but they rose in 2003 over the lower levels attained in 2002 and 2001.

Commentary

73. Results in Spanish, the only language assessed at GCSE in 2002 and 2003, have been well below the national average for several years. In 2001, they were very low, but the percentage of pupils achieving higher grade (A* to C) passes has doubled, despite being still below average. The recent improvements in work seen are laying sound foundations for future success in examinations, and the team which is currently in place is very committed to achieving this objective. Standards in class are average in Years 7 to 9 in speaking and listening, and below average in Years 10 and 11, reflecting the disturbed staffing provision of previous years. However, in Years 10 and 11, most pupils, including the boys, showed confidence in speaking. All the boys in a Year 11 Spanish class participated with gusto in a series of well-structured drills. In answering questions too, boys were equally keen to respond, though often less accurately than the girls.

74. In both French and Spanish, pupils are developing good accents as a result of learning from the very good models they hear. Pupils are willing to undertake the rigorous drilling which underpins the recent improvements. They can ask and answer a wide range of routine questions by the end of Year 9. This is because a number of the listening exercises they do are quite challenging, introducing new material alongside that which they have already practised. They cope well with older contextualised knowledge in a new setting, and are able to transpose it well.
75. In Years 10 and 11, pupils can use adjectives with some confidence and describe themselves and their friends. However, in work seen, pupils used only the present tense, although they were familiar with some reflexive and irregular verb forms. In a Spanish class dealing with features of the home, pupils recalled their earlier work well, and this was supported well by the teacher's insistent, effective repetition of relevant vocabulary and grammatical structures.
76. Pupils are benefiting from and responding well to generally good teaching, which is focused on raising standards. Teaching often has flair and the atmosphere in the classrooms is engendering a sense of achievement and fun in language learning. Consequently, pupils work hard and concentrate well. This characteristic was evident in the after-school catch-up lessons, as well as in class. Pupils enjoy language games and learn from them. They also enjoy pair work, which they take seriously and use well to ensure reinforcement of their knowledge and increased fluency.
77. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported by teaching assistants who are fully familiar with the teacher's objectives and are a very valuable learning resource. They take very great pains to understand the subject matter and practise along with the pupils. They encourage many pupils with words of praise in the language, whilst also ably supporting statemented pupils, with the result that these pupils are fully engaged in their work.
78. The range of materials in use does not adequately stretch the more able learners, who sometimes repeat work which is well understood without progressing beyond it. There are few resources beyond the course textbooks, and although the department can book use of the computer suites, this is a relatively rare activity.
79. The department is now well led, but has some way to go to build up the resources and procedures that will help it to ensure progression and raise standards. Lesson planning is not yet consistently sufficiently detailed to ensure that the range of activities and materials meets all pupils' needs. The department has suffered from a long period of staffing instability, the effects of which its current teachers are endeavouring to overcome. This means that progress since the time of the last inspection has been unsatisfactory.

MATHEMATICS

Overall the provision for mathematics is **satisfactory with some good features**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Successful implementation of strategies for teaching and learning results in a rising trend of attainment that is significantly above the national trend for this age range.
- The subject benefits from strong and determined management and leadership by the head of department of a stable team of mutually supportive and suitably qualified teachers.
- Detailed analysis and use of data helps to set challenging targets for pupils' achievement.
- Effective and relevant use of ICT enhances pupils' understanding of mathematics.
- The department provides an attractive and well-resourced environment for teaching and learning.
- The department has not yet devised fully effective strategies for teaching and learning that will bring about sustained improvement in pupils' achievements in Years 10 and 11.
- Marking of pupils' work does not follow the agreed policy to help them improve their mathematics.
- The three-stage plan for the structure of lessons is not consistently applied.

Commentary

80. At the end of Year 9, the standard of attainment of pupils in mathematics was well below the national average in 2002. However, it was broadly in line with that of similar schools and on one measure it was amongst the top 25 per cent of such schools. Since 1999 the results have been improving at a rate that is significantly above the national trend. This progress was maintained in 2003 when the results were a further improvement on those of the previous year, especially in the proportion of pupils who attained at the higher levels.
81. GCSE results are below the national average with the results in 2003 falling below those of the previous year. Both boys and girls attain less well in mathematics at the end of Year 11 than they do in some of their other subjects.
82. The standard of work seen during the inspection was at least satisfactory, with some that was good or better. Pupils enjoy and respond well to short-term activities such as those testing their numerical skills, but find some difficulties with those activities that require sustained concentration to solve longer problems. This is confirmed by their enthusiasm for making use of ICT to enhance their learning of equations, for example, because of the instant feedback the programme provides to their responses. Another benefit of the good use made by the teachers of ICT is the opportunity it provides for pupils to progress at their own rate.
83. The achievement of pupils is better in Years 7 to 9, where it is good, than in Years 10 and 11, where it is satisfactory. This has been brought about as a result of the implementation of particular strategies to improve teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9. These include structuring the lesson into three distinct stages and creating smaller teaching groups that take more account of pupils' abilities. There is no sustained pattern of different groups of pupils achieving at different rates of progress.
84. For the most part the quality of teaching and learning is at least satisfactory with some that is good or better. It is better in Years 7 to 9 than in Years 10 and 11. The most successful lessons begin with a clear statement of objectives, move on to the core activity and conclude with a review of what has been learned. The best lessons are well-planned and stimulate the interest of pupils. A good example of this was seen in a Year 7 lesson when a teacher made use of the interactive whiteboard in the library to link the teaching of decimals to the Dewey system for the classification of books. This encouraged the pupils' understanding of decimal numbers by providing an example of their practical use.
85. Those lessons that were ineffective lacked pace and structure and failed to stimulate the interest of pupils, resulting in significant activity by pupils that was unrelated to the objectives of the lesson.
86. Leadership and management are strong and determined. For the first time for several years the department has a full complement of permanent appointments of suitably qualified teachers. This provides the opportunity for the head of department to make plans on a secure basis. The current development plan aims for the design and implementation of a self-assessment policy for pupils as part of a further strategy for raising their attainment. It plans also for the installation of interactive whiteboards in the department's classrooms to enhance the quality of teaching. Although there is evidence of extremely conscientious marking by some teachers, the overall impression is that the marking of pupils' work is inconsistent across the department. The school policy is that marking should be diagnostic and this is implemented well by some teachers. For example, one teacher finished her marking of a pupil's work by writing: *"You have started off well. If you have another look and see where you have gone wrong you should be able to draw the spiral correctly."* Other marking is not carried out so thoroughly and is superficial and scanty.

87. The department is conscious of its responsibilities to provide for the needs of pupils of all abilities and aptitudes. It makes good use of available data to set challenging targets for pupils that are linked to their prior attainment. In their lessons, teachers work closely with teaching and learning assistants to support those pupils with learning and language difficulties. They ensure also that those who are more able are identified and receive additional support and extension work. This is illustrated by the provision made for two particularly gifted pupils in Year 7 who are being prepared for early entry for the GCSE examination.
88. Overall, the performance and provision of mathematics has improved satisfactorily since the time of the last inspection. Standards of attainment have risen at both key stages and are moving closer to the national averages. The attitudes of pupils towards the subject have improved and they make greater use of ICT to enhance their understanding. Although there is some evidence that the marking of pupils' work is more helpful in giving feedback, this remains an area for development to achieve greater consistency.

Mathematics across the curriculum

89. Overall standards are satisfactory with particular improvement being evident amongst pupils at Key Stage 3. Although there are few overt examples of mathematics being incorporated as an integral part of other subjects, there is good evidence of it being used relevantly in subjects such as science and technology. Teachers in the mathematics department ensure that appropriate applications of the subject are drawn to the attention of pupils. A good example of this was seen in a mathematics lesson that took place in the library in order to draw the attention of pupils to the use of decimal numbers in the Dewey system for the classification of library books. This lesson made good use of the librarian who explained to pupils how the system worked in practice. Pupils were then directed to carry out specific tasks designed to enhance their learning. A further example of the department's aim to promote mathematics as a subject that has applications across the curriculum, pupils are given regular timetabled opportunities to make use of information technology to enhance their learning.
90. The department plays a full part in the school's provision for out of hours learning and many pupils take advantage of these extra learning opportunities further to develop their knowledge and understanding of mathematics.

SCIENCE

Overall, the provision for science is **good, with some very good aspects**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership in the subject is a strength
- The standards achieved at GCSE have improved dramatically since 2000. This sharply rising trend in standards at both key stages indicates the rate of improvement in science
- The achievement over time in both key stages is good
- Aspects of the teaching and learning – including the use of IT – are not improving at a fast enough rate
- Some work should be more appropriately matched to individual pupil needs
- The opportunities for more open-ended experimental investigations are not sufficiently extended
- Science teaching does not adequately incorporate appropriate aspects of spiritual, moral and cultural education into schemes of work

Commentary

91. Results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 have improved dramatically since 2000, although they remain below the national average after a slight fall in 2003. The relative performances of girls and boys have fluctuated in the last two years. Boys under-

performed in 2002 but this was reversed in 2003. The overall levels of achievement reached are satisfactory in relation to pupils' achievement at the end of their primary education but very good when compared with similar schools.

92. Results at GCSE have also risen sharply in recent years and in 2002 were comfortably above the national average. In 2003 a fall brought results close to the national average. In 2002 boys had a higher average points score than the girls. They continued their improvement in 2003. The level of achievement reached by these pupils, since the end of Key stage 3, is very good. It shows the best performance in relation to other subjects in the school.
93. In lessons and work seen in Years 7 to 9, standards are in line with the expected national levels. An investigation started in Year 6 in feeder schools and continued into Year 7 provides an interesting challenge. It shows that pupils can collect and collate data and represent them in various forms, such as graphs. In a different context one Year 7 class successfully applied the particle theory to explain the fluidity of liquids. Indicative of the progression in concept levels was a Year 9 lesson where pupils were able to explain the transfer and radiation of heat both in terms of particle theory and the properties of waves. In another Year 9 class, on the other hand, pupils had difficulty in explaining the mechanisms of photosynthesis clearly.
94. Achievement by pupils in Years 7 to 9, at this time of the year, is in line with expectations and they are making satisfactory progress and reaching standards of work in line with expectations for their ages. Pupils with special educational needs are generally well supported and are making good progress.
95. Lessons and work seen in Years 10 and 11 similarly show standards at the expected national level but there was a wide range in the standards of work, from well above to below national expectations. At one level, pupils were unable to apply previous knowledge to predict the typical curve in a graph following the rate of reaction between an acid and a metal. At another level a class was able to use its understanding of chemical bonding to see that the structure of a substance is not necessarily of discrete particles but may have a lattice or giant structure. Pupils were able to use this concept in interpreting observed physical properties in a range of materials.
96. Achievement in Years 10 and 11, in relation to progress being made and standards reached, is good. Pupils with special educational needs also continue to make good progress. Extensive data on the performance of girls and boys and of the different ethnic groups within the school are regularly analysed and trends monitored. There is no persistent, significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls. By GCSE the highest achieving group is Bangladeshi pupils collectively. British white girls are very close to these levels. Boys show much improvement overall in the 2003 GCSE results and there is no significant difference in their performance overall. British white boys are the lowest-performing group but improvements are becoming evident in Year 10.
97. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory but good in Years 10 and 11. Some unsatisfactory teaching was observed. This does not reflect the notable achievement in national tests and examinations in the last few years. The staffing position is currently in a state of flux. A new head of department is awaited and temporary staff are being employed. Most teachers have good subject knowledge. Exposition and instruction are usually clear and pupils know what is expected of them. Understanding of the concepts being taught is greatly enhanced in those lessons where relevant practical work and supplementary materials, such as worksheets, support the teaching. In some lessons too many worksheets are used and lead to a confusion of direction. There are instances where well-conceived strategies are employed to match the needs of different groups and classroom assistants are effective in their support but generally there is insufficient attempt to address all pupils' varying needs, especially in mixed ability classes. Understanding is also improved where teachers use a carefully sequenced series of well-directed questions. Although learning objectives are usually listed in lesson plans they should be shared with a class as targets for the lesson and as a basis for a summing up of a lesson. Too often lessons end hurriedly without a clear conclusion. Sometimes the timing of

phases of lessons is unrealistic with some activities taking up a disproportionate amount of time. Whilst teachers do have high expectations of their classes, plans are over-ambitious at times. Effective linking of learning objectives to assessment is seen in a few lessons but they should always be linked to immediate or short-term assessment, in class or through homework, so that pupils and teachers have a more continuous awareness of the progress being made or not. This, in conjunction with improved and consistent marking practice should be extended to setting more precise, day-to-day targets. The setting of longer-term targets through monitoring assessment data is very good.

98. Co-operation, willingness and motivation, encouraged by the positive ethos of the school and department, enhance learning. Some pupils are content just to receive information. There is a need for them to be more interactive with their teachers, especially at Key Stage 3. There is some development in opportunities for independent work in problem solving and research but it requires extending.
99. The leadership in the subject is very good. The school is seeking a Leading Department award in the local authority. Management is good but more responsibilities should be shared within the department. There are good relationships within the department. The drive and determination to improve standards has proved successful over recent years. This success is built on a significant revision programme and an awareness of the requirements and techniques at national tests and examinations, particularly at Key Stage 4. There is scope for broadening the curriculum through more integration into the schemes of work of use of information technology and opportunities for spiritual, moral and cultural aspects of the subject.
100. Since the previous inspection standards and achievement have improved significantly. The school has been granted science college status and accommodation and resources are much improved as a result of that investment.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The provision for information and communication technology is **good**. The quality of teaching is effective in raising standards, particularly in Year 11 and for students taking GNVQ.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is challenging and supports individual learning (especially in Years 10 and 11)
- Interactive whiteboards give access to a wider range of teaching and learning and their integration and use in some subjects are good
- Tracking of student performance and target setting help to raise standards
- Results are improving at both key stages
- There are very good opportunities to use ICT to support learning in extra-curricular sessions
- There is reliable integration of new networks, resources and technical support
- Teaching styles are sometimes inadequately matched to the needs of the students
- Standards in Year 9 are not sufficiently related to National Curriculum levels
- The programme of study in Years 7 to 9 is not well covered
- The data bank of student work in Years 7, 8 and 9 is limited, especially in Year 9

Commentary

101. Pupils' knowledge of ICT when they arrive in the school is improving but remains variable. In 2003, attainment in Year 9 was below the national average. This does not fully reflect attainment overall. Targets have been set by the department to return to around national average figures and from work seen this is likely to be achieved. Teacher assessments are currently ungenerous compared to similar schools.

102. Standards of achievement in Year 7 are good and pupils develop the planning of a scheme for presenting information in digital form using a variety of font design. Several higher attaining students do this quickly and some find the explanations too long. They log on to the Internet while the teacher explains the task. Support for literacy is good in annotating diagrams and note taking. Support for pupils with special educational needs is effective in ensuring that the task has an outcome and progress is made in the slide-show presentation. In Year 8, the task on public information systems relating to the weather is engaging. All students are enthusiastically on target to achieve the national expectation especially in reviewing, modelling and evaluating work as it progresses. Year 8 also benefit from extra-curricular activities on web-design supported under the link scheme with the City of London. Year 9 students are strongly developing ideas and making things happen, exploring patterns and relationships, especially using flow charts and systems to sequence instructions; for example the changing of traffic lights using images interactively. The interactive whiteboard makes the task highly effective in promoting learning for the whole class. Pupils with English as their additional language use their first language to ensure that progress is fully maintained at the pace of the rest of the class.
103. In 2003, over eight out of ten pupils gained a pass grade. GCSE pupils in Year 11 attained below the national average at grades A* to C and around the national average at grades A* to G. In GNVQ (Intermediate) all of the students gained A to C grades in the first year of the course. Year 10 students are achieving very well in GNVQ coursework set by the examination board on word processing, picture editing and integrated application software. Pupils keep to strict deadlines and a GCSE short course in ICT is provided for those who cannot do this. There is some very good artwork with excellent features in the work of high attaining pupils.
104. The effective use of peer support, related to the different projects currently under way, contributes to the overall high standards. Individual assessments on pupils' progress and achievement are made throughout and pupils are questioned by the teacher on their understanding of key concepts and themes as part of the course. Most pupils are on target to achieve grades A* to C in 2004. In Year 11, some pupils are working below C grade because they are too dependent on others for assistance or their own ICT skills need consolidation. There is good achievement in compiling data; for example in planning a holiday itinerary related to the most cost-effective journey. Pupils make reference to appropriate websites and search engines when allowed the freedom to work at their own pace. Time is well used especially by those students who do not have computers at home. Bangladeshi girls are less secure in ICT skills when compared to their verbal ability.
105. Teaching is good overall with some very good features. There are well-equipped ICT rooms and staff possess good subject knowledge and ICT competence including in how to make best use of interactive whiteboards. In Years 7 to 9, the school ICT strategy is making a valuable difference to lesson planning and forms part of a coherent plan. Where teaching was just satisfactory, the problems came from insufficient match of teaching style to pupils' needs and the lack of provision of suitable material for lower attaining students. The response to the national Key Stage 3 strategy lacks urgency in several departments in the school because the planning has not yet affected classroom practice. Support teachers and classroom assistants make an impact with their students because they have been well prepared in how they can help in ICT by the class teacher. The training of teachers in the application of ICT in their subjects, on the other hand, is inconsistent.
106. Teachers are beginning to use the prepared materials on the school Intranet, which includes folders for pupils to access. Teachers in ICT prepare work very well and use the Internet, spreadsheets and presentation software effectively in lessons. Assessment in ICT is thorough and regular although the range of students' work on the Intranet is limited in Year 9.

107. Leadership and management of the subject are developing well. ICT teachers receive good management and technical support resulting in cost effective re-use of older equipment and new technologies. Training support for colleagues is highly valued and has now been put onto the staff timetable reflecting the importance of upgrading skills and awareness of the use of ICT in all subjects.
108. Since the last inspection the funding for ICT in the school has improved to around one third higher than national averages and the ratio of computers to pupils is currently very good and already near the 2006 government target. Development planning for ICT is robust, builds on the Key Stage 3 strategy and makes this an inclusive subject for all students. Attainment remains a concern, which the department has tackled with realistic targets, the choice of appropriate courses to match student need, and the use of new technologies to support teaching and learning. The school has made good progress in the use of web-based resources including the London Grid for Learning. Students leave the school well equipped to face the demands of ICT in the work place and in higher education. Although there are some gaps in subject provision in Years 10 and 11 and some weaknesses in teaching still to be managed, the school has made very good progress in the foundations for teaching ICT and resources on which the school builds.

Information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum.

109. Achievement is generally satisfactory and standards in ICT are reported to parents. The provision for ICT does not impact strongly enough on the achievement of students especially in science and the humanities. In subjects generally across the school, there is a wide range in performance with the attainment of most students being below average. In Years 7 to 9, in ICT, mathematics, English, design and technology, physical education and music, the nine key concepts of ICT capability are well supported particularly when finding things out and exchanging and sharing information. In Years 10 and 11, good practice in these areas is seen in 'Great Expectations' and the 'Bayeux Tapestry'. ICT and music show the best application of developing ideas and making things happen in controlling and modelling information in music compositions and in setting up sequences of instructions in the working of traffic lights.
110. The current GCSE provision in Years 10 and 11 does not cover all pupils in these year groups, although there is good use of ICT in GNVQ programmes such as leisure and tourism and ICT, which are growing in popularity. After school ICT activities including *learning support* are well used and the librarian has devised helpful links to websites in connection with several departments in the school, particularly English and mathematics. The access to ICT for students before, during and after school is very good and better than in similar schools. The culture for ICT, especially when using interactive whiteboards, is rapidly growing but more has to be done in organising and investigating, analysing and automating processes, monitoring and recording data (especially in science) so that students can achieve the highest standards in ICT.

HUMANITIES

History

Provision for history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a commitment to raise standards and heighten interest in the subject
- Teachers make good use of a variety of resources to promote learning
- Overall standards of attainment are well below average
- The lack of regular and challenging homework to promote independent learning
- Pupils are making insufficient use of ICT

Commentary

111. In 2002, GCSE results were significantly below the national average for all maintained schools. Forty-two per cent of students achieved grades A* to C. In 2003, the proportion increased to 46 per cent gaining A* to C grades. In terms of relative performance, over the two years these results were amongst the weakest in the school. There were no distinct or consistent variations between the attainment of boys and girls or between different groups of pupils.
112. Pupils are attaining standards that are below those expected nationally by the end of Year 9, but are an improvement on standards on entry. This represents achievement that is broadly satisfactory. Pupils have a basic knowledge and understanding of the major historical events and personalities they are studying. They appreciate that history is based on evidence. Most pupils show a developing sense of chronology and many are beginning to use historical terms appropriately. For the majority of pupils, work in history is hindered by difficulty in writing extended passages confidently and accurately. Whilst most pupils acquire satisfactory listening and oral skills, their writing skills are less assured and many find particular difficulty in adopting a formal writing style. Lower attaining pupils can write in simple sentences to describe historical events but their work is frequently flawed by poor sentence construction and spelling errors. Higher attaining pupils write more extensively and with greater fluency, although weaknesses in literacy can reduce the overall quality of their performance.
113. At the end of Year 11, overall standards attained by pupils are still below national averages. However, pupils' historical understanding has deepened. They are able to use sources to support their responses but many still find difficulty in developing points of reference. Higher attaining pupils analyse evidence effectively to produce reasoned arguments. Lower attaining pupils use sources to support their narratives and can draw simple conclusions. In general, pupils listen attentively and participate with interest in class discussions. However, many are reluctant to pursue independent lines of enquiry and by the end of Year 11, the majority of pupils are still dependent on their teachers for their learning.
114. Pupils are making satisfactory progress in lessons largely due to the focused teaching of basic skills and to the level of individual help they are offered by specialist teachers and, when present, support teachers and assistants. Lower attaining pupils, and those with special educational needs, including English as an additional language, generally make similar rates of progress as their peers. Higher attaining pupils are well served by the range of extension activities set in lessons.
115. The quality of classroom teaching is good. Teachers possess an appropriate level of subject knowledge and are purposeful in their approach. Lessons are carefully planned, clearly structured, and well paced. Learning objectives are outlined at the start of each lesson and an attempt is made to conclude with an evaluation of gains in learning. Teachers deliver lessons in which pupils of different ability are appropriately challenged. Good quality resources, which reflect the different needs of the pupils, are used to stimulate interest and help understanding. However, as yet there is little liaison with the co-ordinators of special educational needs and English as an additional language and opportunities are therefore lost for these teachers to contribute to the overall effectiveness of lesson planning and teaching strategies. Good relationships underpin firm classroom control. However, where teachers lack experience in classroom management, behaviour can deteriorate. Whilst pupils generally work well in class, they do not possess the independent study habits or the confidence to take responsibility for their own learning. The provision of regular homework, including extended writing tasks, would do much to support the development of knowledge, skills and understanding. There is also scope to extend opportunities for pupils to use their initiative and for regular testing to improve standards of recall.
116. The department acknowledges the importance of skills development in lesson planning. Programmes of study include the development of literacy and numeracy. As yet the subject has provided very limited opportunities to develop ICT skills.

117. An experienced subject leader, who demonstrates a commitment to raise standards reflected in a positive ethos, leads the department. Appropriate priorities are being set for the future. Monitoring and assessment procedures are largely satisfactory. The department sets individual targets, which are shared with pupils. Class work is marked regularly and pupils are given clear guidelines for the improvement of their performance. However, there is scope to extend this good practice to the provision of homework and to clarify assessment criteria, particularly at GCSE level.
118. Appropriate schemes of work are in place. The history area has attractive and colourful displays of pupils' work, which celebrate pupil achievement. As yet little is done to enrich the curriculum and develop cultural understanding by means of a programme of visits. There is also scope for the department to contribute to the extra-curricular life of the school, specifically through history clubs and competitions. Topics of study help towards the development of moral and social understanding. There has been satisfactory improvement in teaching and learning since the last inspection.

Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results in geography are well below the national average
- Assessment is not used to show pupils what they have to do to improve or to set challenging targets for them
- Teachers share their enthusiasm for geography with the pupils who listen and behave well
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress
- Gifted and talented pupils are not sufficiently challenged to work independently and to develop research skills
- ICT is not well used and fieldwork investigation skills are not well developed

Commentary

119. Standards in the teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 were below the national average in 2002. GCSE results were well below the national average. Neither improved in 2003. There are no significant differences in standards according to pupils' gender or ethnic heritage and pupils with special educational needs attain well. Pupils have good map skills, use geographical terms accurately and can describe and explain the features of river erosion and deposition. Their examination coursework is good but they do not use ICT skills or Internet research often enough in other lessons.
120. Pupils achieve as well as expected in Years 7 to 9 but there is not enough extended writing or project work, although they listen well and are confident in discussions. They achieve as well as expected in Years 10 to 11 and have a good understanding of how political and planning decisions can destroy the natural environment. Their written work is illustrated with appropriate graphs and charts. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well with the support of learning assistants and when they are given individual work. White pupils achieve as well as others in the class. There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls. Gifted and talented pupils are not given work that is sufficiently challenging.
121. Teaching throughout the school is satisfactory overall, with some good teaching in both Years 7 to 9 and at GCSE level. In the best lessons teachers set a fast and challenging pace, supported by a range of interesting resources used and a variety of activities. As a result, pupils have a secure knowledge of the Kobe earthquake and its impact on both individual families and urban facilities. When teachers encourage paired and group work pupils respond well. They make less progress where explanations are not clear or when too many oral instructions are given.

Relationships in all classes are open, trusting and friendly so that standards of behaviour are consistently good. The department makes a good contribution to pupils' social, moral and cultural development.

122. Homework is relevant and used to extend pupils' skills. Oral feedback in class is good but written comments, while positive, are too general and do not tell pupils what they need to do to improve. There is a limited range of assessments in Year 7 to 9, particularly to measure attainment against National Curriculum standards. They are not used to plan lessons to meet the needs of all pupils. Clear targets are not set and monitored.
123. The interim head of department is strongly committed to the raising of standards, is a very good role model and sets high expectations for the pupils. The department is well managed on a day-to-day basis. Subject knowledge and understanding have improved since the last inspection but schemes of work do not include precise planning for literacy, numeracy and ICT skills.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of attainment, and the quality of teaching and learning are overall satisfactory.
- In Year 10, pupils welcome the opportunity to do the short course GCSE.
- Lessons are planned in detail and the aim is shared with pupils.
- Essential areas for development are identified in the religious education handbook.

- There is a very limited range of activities and resources used to engage pupils' interest
- Most pupils do not do homework, so its impact on raising standards is minimal
- There is undue emphasis on learning about religions, with little attention to what can be learned from them
- Expectations are too low

Commentary

124. In Years 7 to 9, standards of attainment in relation to national expectations are, overall, satisfactory. Achievement in relation to pupils' abilities is also satisfactory. However, a significant number of more able pupils are not being sufficiently stretched. In Years 10 and 11, standards are close to the national average and results in the short course GCSE have improved this year. All pupils take the short course GCSE in Year 10, but in Year 11 only about 50 per cent are entered for the full course.
125. Throughout the school, some pupils, both boys and girls, lack interest in the subject. This is partly because the subject was adversely affected for some years by staffing difficulties and lack of priority within the overall curriculum plan. However, this has now been rectified and the courses available are motivating larger numbers to participate in religious education and to put the necessary effort into achieving good grades in the GCSE short course.
126. Insufficient importance is attached to homework: it is accepted that most pupils will not do it and as a result it has minimal impact on improving standards. The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is otherwise satisfactory. Lessons are carefully planned but they lack a range of interesting, enjoyable and challenging activities to engage all pupils, particularly the potentially highest attainers. There is an overuse of uninspiring worksheets and very little use of audio-visual resources such as videos or CD ROMs.
127. In one lesson there was a good explanation of Hindu worship and pupils were actively engaged in demonstrating parts of it. They were very respectful but had little opportunity to show what they had learned and understood by the end of the session. There is a need to encourage discussion

and evaluation of various points of view so that pupils will learn to think deeply and independently. Given the pupils' interest in religions and cultures – their own and those of others, there is a firm foundation upon which to build such teaching and learning plans.

128. The overall quality and provision for religious education has improved since the last inspection but the school is still in breach of the statutory requirement to provide religious education for all pupils in Year 11.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

Provision for design and technology is **good within a restricted curriculum**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well in resistant materials
- Pupils develop a very good approach to learning
- Teachers are very effective because they have high expectations and present good levels of challenge
- The accommodation restricts the curriculum
- Statutory requirements are not met

Commentary

129. Standards by the end of Year 9 are average; by the end of Year 11, they are above average. Sixty-seven per cent of pupils who were entered achieved a GCSE pass within the range of A* to C and their average point score was above the national average. Examination results show continuous improvement over the last three years. Pupils' achievement in Years 9 and 11 is very good. As is the case nationally, girls achieve better results than boys, but not significantly so. The achievement of ethnic minorities, particularly Bangladeshi pupils, is very good. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported to achieve. Pupils' work shows clear incremental development of their designs and they are very proud of the high quality products they make. These are achieved as a result of great perseverance. They accept the need to improve first attempts and, in Years 10 and 11, they often re-draft a piece of work four or five times, making substantial improvements each time.
130. The teaching is good and often better, particularly in Years 10 and 11. Not only are teachers very knowledgeable about their subject and the examination requirements but they are very enthusiastic. As a result they have very high expectations of pupils and provide high levels of challenge and support. Because pupils remain with the same teacher for a year or more, teachers have a very good overview of the strengths and weaknesses of pupils. Frequent, well-focused discussions about their work with their teachers help pupils to achieve very well. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 develop a very good understanding of the qualities of resistant materials. They model different processes as they go along to test out their ideas. They have a very good understanding of the principles of good design.
131. Good management of the subject has resulted in improving standards and effective teamwork. However, the constraints of the accommodation mean that pupils do not have access to a sufficiently wide range of materials. Pupils only work with wood, or wood substitutes or plastic. Statutory requirements are not, therefore, met. The rooms and equipment are dated. There are safety hazards in the blind spots in two of the rooms. Access to equipment is difficult for pupils in wheelchairs. There is insufficient access to information and communication technology. Nevertheless, there have been good improvements since the last inspection. The quality of teaching has improved and, as a result, pupils' achievement has improved significantly.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art

Provision in art is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in GCSE are in line with national averages
- There is a systematic approach to improving teaching and learning
- Standards are good in two-dimensional graphic work and textiles
- Comprehensive departmental documentation and assessment procedures aid teachers in their work
- Broadening the art curriculum to incorporate a balance between two-dimensional and three-dimensional work would provide pupils with a richer curriculum
- Extending the use of ICT, both as a tool for learning and to record progressively pupils' progress using digital/CD technology is a National Curriculum requirement not yet met

Commentary

132. Standards throughout the school are satisfactory. By the end of Year 9, pupils acquire a good knowledge of art. Although their observational drawing standards are less well developed, their artistic knowledge, including that of artistic terminology and key artists and periods is satisfactory. Pupils are making significant progress through Years 7 to 9.
133. Standards in GCSE are in line with national averages, with 63.8 per cent of pupils gaining an A* to C grade in 2002. Results have continued to improve since the last inspection. When compared with similar schools, results are very good. A diverse range of strategies, including a more flexible approach to learning, has addressed the difference in performance between boys and girls, which was an issue at the last inspection, and continued to be evident in the examination results in 2002. The difference is now not significant.
134. By the end of Year 11, pupils are drawing with increasing confidence and graphic design work, manipulating pattern, colour and texture, are good. Particularly confident work is taking place in textiles, and in the development of an observed source into an abstract design. Sketchbooks are emphasised as a key method of collecting data and engaging in research.
135. Teaching is always satisfactory and often good. Lessons are introduced confidently and imaginatively using an appropriate range of teaching styles. Lessons are well structured with good use of questioning to ensure that pupils understand what is expected of them. Lesson pace is maintained by regular and appropriate interventions: teachers noted any pupils who were not working and dealt with learning needs effectively. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good, based on mutual respect and understanding.
136. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good. Initially in Year 7, some pupils find difficulty in focusing on their learning in art - at this early stage they have not yet fully understood teachers' high expectations for their behaviour. However by the end of Year 9, their attitude to learning is always positive and pupils are motivated and responsible. Pupils are increasingly enthusiastic, involved actively, developing as independent learners and using effective research skills to support their GCSE portfolio. Relationships between pupils are consistently good and pupils worked in harmony in pairs during a practical GCSE project.
137. Pupils learn about art in a range of different cultures; for instance in one project, teachers linked Aboriginal, Oriental and Asian art forms in developing art and design work integrating dye, print and construction activities. Another design project centres on an excellent and well-used local resource, the Geffrye Museum.

138. Assessment systems are very well developed and pupils' progress is well monitored. Assessment helps pupils to improve and each unit of work is carefully assessed. National Curriculum levels are used appropriately and pupils evaluate their performance and set themselves termly targets for improvement. However, opportunities for teachers and pupils to assess together individual progress over a longer period are hampered by the policy of allowing pupils to take home their work at the end of each year.
139. The department is led by an experienced teacher who, because of additional duties as a year head, is supported by another experienced part-time colleague. Storage limits opportunities for three-dimensional work. There is no ICT equipment available for pupils' use within the art and design department and access to the central school suite is insufficient. This lack of immediate availability of ICT within the department, as a tool for artistic exploration, is unsatisfactory.
140. Since the last inspection the department has continued to improve. Examination results at GCSE have maintained their upward trend. There is an increased focus on observational work although standards are still variable. The issue of boys' under-achievement has been addressed. The only area of concern that remains from the last inspection is the limited amount of three-dimensional work that is taking place, resulting in a narrow curriculum. The department is well managed and leadership is good.

Drama

Quality of provision in drama is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good
- The subject contributes well to the social, moral and cultural development of pupils
- The pupils and the school would gain if there were more opportunities for public performance

Commentary

141. Standards at the end of Year 9 are in line with the national expectation. Pupils generate ideas about performance, in one lesson developing different interpretations of the master-servant relationship. They can express these ideas imaginatively in action. Some are tempted to become too physical, and quickly slip out of character. But the best cooperate well with the weaker, and produce imaginative results. By the end of Year 11 standards are at or rather above the national. Examination results in 2001 and 2002 were among the best in the school, and markedly better than in the year before. Pupils can use such devices as still image, flashback and addressing the audience. They are particularly adept at evaluating their own work and that of other groups. Once inspired by the teacher they are quick to develop ideas, and need little further prompting. They are good at relating their own experiences to the drama they create in the studio, being aware of risks and temptations outside school and using this awareness to deepen the impact of performance. Good examples of improvisation and hot-seating were observed in Year 11.
142. Achievement is at least satisfactory by Year 9, and good by Year 11. Pupils, some of them academically weak, become visibly more confident; they learn from experience and grow more independent.
143. Teaching and learning are both satisfactory in the earlier years, and good in Years 10 and 11. Strengths lie in subject expertise, management of pupils, ability to communicate, and ability to inspire positive attitudes in the class. A recent innovation is the awarding of merit marks to increase motivation. Objectives are always clear. Pupils know what is expected, and how well they are doing. It was clear how well the teacher challenged and supported pupils working in small groups. Sometimes the teacher would comment too forcefully on a presentation, not giving

time for pupils to comment first, and thereby inhibiting their responses. Overall, pupils were enabled to learn well by their own performance and the subsequent evaluation.

144. The teacher in charge of drama has re-written the handbook and the schemes of work. She has cooperated productively with music and English, and organised drama activities in assemblies, at meetings of governors and parents, and as part of the induction evening for Year 6. However there have recently been no large-scale school productions. That said, there are many visits to theatres, visits from theatre groups, and a general widening of the social and cultural experience of all pupils. Those in Year 7 are made aware of some basic themes in *King Lear*, those in Year 8 study *Macbeth*. Older pupils study Brecht and Arthur Miller.
145. The last inspection in 1998 gave a very strong report to drama, but since then examination results declined. The new head of drama has improved results markedly since she came in 2000, and maintained high standards in teaching, learning and assessment.

Music

Provision for music is **good**.

The quality of teaching is effective in raising achievement but recent improvements are only just beginning to make an impact upon standards overall. In Years 10 and 11, music is taught after school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching, especially in Years 7 and 8, is good
- Provision for the use of ICT, especially in Years 10 and 11, helps pupils to appreciate and involve themselves in their music
- Tracking of students' progress is well planned and pupils improve as a result
- Leadership, curriculum planning and the 'success culture' of the subject all contribute to its impact on pupils' learning
- The curriculum is insufficiently comprehensive to provide enough breadth and balance
- Teachers' appraisal of standards in Year 9 is insufficiently related to National Curriculum levels
- Too few students opt for GCSE, in part because courses are not well matched to their needs

Commentary

146. Teachers' assessments showed a falling trend in 2001 and 2002. In 2003, results at the end of Year 9 were still well below the average recorded nationally, but standards are now improving. The time allocation for music is reduced in Year 9, which lowers the impact of the subject in the curriculum for pupils.
147. Standards are good in some lessons, for example in a Year 7 lesson where students composed a piece to advertise food products using rhythmic patterns with the voice. The reason for this improvement is the quality of the teachers' preparation. Year 8 students investigate 'Scat' singing using vocalised sounds to stimulate ideas and several pieces have higher-level skills of shifted tonal centres and cross-rhythms. Year 9 pupils are not achieving as much as they should because the programme of study is not fully covered. Pupils explore by trial and error rather than by evaluating the sounds they hear, but good support for social development while working in groups is achieved. Word banks, keywords and learning about how words are used in context, support literacy. All students use sequencers and keyboards to support learning in music and ICT and students with special educational needs sometimes take a leading role in practical work helped by learning support assistants.
148. In 2003, at the end of Year 11, the numbers taking GCSE were too small for valid statistical comparison with national results. Pupils gained grades between B to G, with two B's and two C's. The school target of grades at A* to C was exceeded. This was a significant improvement

upon the previous year's results. In class, performing shows a high level of commitment although teacher assessments are a little too generous in ensemble pieces. Composing activities are stimulating and imaginative but some teacher assessments are a little severe in ideas, medium and style. Compositions are often long, repetitive and lack development.

149. Higher attaining pupils do not maintain the same levels of progress in Years 10 and 11 but they are making satisfactory progress from their low base in Year 9. Lower attaining students present consistent work, which shows good structural shape and consistency of character. This represents good achievement. All pupils find the integrated assignments challenging, but standards of presentation are very good. Boys, including the white minority, achieved better than girls, which is not the national picture. Some pupils are unaware that the use of the voice or acoustic instruments could help them in performance.
150. Three visiting teachers funded by the school give additional lessons on a limited range of instruments. There are four students in Year 7 who play the trombone (a national shortage instrument) and have not yet been found a teacher. This area of support for music is below expectation and affects the take-up for instrumental and vocal groups, concerts and performances in the school. The level of support for GCSE, including team teaching, is very good.
151. Teaching is at least good in three out of four lessons 'overall' including the extra-curricular activities. Teachers know their subject well, crisply impart knowledge, and pupils with special educational needs and pupils for whom English is not their first language make at least similar progress in lessons to all students. In some cases pupils with special educational needs make imaginative responses, which stimulate group activity. Pupils do not always listen well to each other or the teacher but most enjoy music lessons and work with application, especially when the task is clear, when whole class activities using the voice and basic skills in music are robust, and when there is a review at the end. Year 9 students want to learn more but are not always provided with sufficient opportunities to learn basic skills in music or with work that matches their needs. Girls achieve particularly well when led by more articulate female pupils in their groups. Boys respond best when performing the same parts together.
152. Marking does not always inform students how they should improve their work. In Years 7 to 9 tape recordings of work in progress are planned developments. A reward system is being developed in line with school policy.
153. The head of department offers good leadership. Teacher assessments in Year 9 are currently severe in judgement so skew the pupils' results downwards unnecessarily. Timetabling music lessons after school and at lunchtimes is a limiting factor and inhibits recruitment in the subject.
154. Health and safety is affected adversely by loud performances in small un-soundproofed rooms, but measures to deal with this are in hand. Other developments including the inclusion of a GCSE course in the option choices from 2004, are raising the profile of music in the school. The development plan has strategies to improve weaknesses in resources, offer alternative vocational qualifications, and recruit more pupils into the subject. The use of ICT has improved and is good and sometimes very good in Year 10, although the equipment will need early replacement. After a long period of low standards and poor presence in the school, music is making improvements now and is well placed to move forward with renewed vigour.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The provision for physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a core of experienced teachers with good subject knowledge and good relationships with the pupils

- Standards are rising, especially at GCSE
- Small classes aid progress
- Extra staff and off-site facilities are used well
- Good documentation supports an annual departmental development plan and review process
- Procedures are working well to monitor pupils' participation including their extra-curricular activities
- There is a need for more support for NQT and untrained staff to ensure quality teaching and learning and more emphasis on selecting and applying and evaluating performance
- It should be a priority to ensure that leadership and management remain strong, and do not weaken as the school sports co-ordinator initiative develops
- Challenge for the more able to raise standards is not yet sufficient

Commentary

155. GCSE results are improving. The introduction of the short course and the change in examination boards had led to improvement. The use of video recordings and personal experiences give depth to GCSE theory work when devising a personal exercise plan. Introduction of the Junior Sports Leader Award in Year 10 has contributed to pupils' personal development and citizenship, as the pupils organise inter-form competitions for Year 7.
156. Teaching is satisfactory overall, better in Years 10 and 11, and practices and drills allow for skill progression. Use of positive feedback to encourage pupils is secure, but feedback to improve performance directly is limited. Teachers' knowledge and subject expertise help pupils learn as in the Year 7 football lesson when specific goalkeeping skills taught by a semi-professional footballer led to some good skill development.
157. Pupils are eager to learn work well together, boys working with girls, different groups working together cooperatively. Pupils can organise themselves into pairs and groups quickly and efficiently. Participation rates are good both in class and extra-curricular activities. A focus on improving the participation of girls in Years 10 and 11 has led to some single sex groupings and access to women only sessions using out-of-school facilities.
158. Pupils are offered a range of opportunities to experience different aspects of physical education, although the provision over-emphasises games. The organisation into lesson blocks in Years 7 to 9 does not allow for consolidation of skill and progression into selecting and applying these skills. Time allocation in Years 10 and 11 is in longer in blocks, so pupils can apply their learning and select different tactics or skills. More time evaluating their own and others' performance would deepen understanding of the quality of movement.
159. Departmental documentation is good, with detailed development plans and clear targets. The head of department is new in post, and heavily involved in the School Sports Coordinator initiative. The benefits of this initiative, especially in terms of Year 9 assessment, are great, but care should be taken to ensure that quality teaching and learning take place in school and that inexperienced members of staff are given the support they need to develop.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

The overall provision for citizenship is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Citizenship is clearly identified as a discrete subject for all year groups within the overall programme for personal and social education
- Leadership and co-ordination of the subject are very good

- Good teaching by a committed team of staff meets with an enthusiastic response from pupils
- The new course content and the quality of teaching and learning have been carefully monitored
- The cross-curricular audit of citizenship is incomplete
- Active citizenship opportunities are a benefit enabling pupils to develop interests and skills for adult life

Commentary

160. The citizenship course clearly reflects the overall ethos of the school as an inclusive learning community. Standards attained in the first GCSE short course in 2003, taken by pupils in Year 10, were broadly in line with those of the school as a whole, with 56 per cent of pupils gaining grades A* to C and 100 per cent grades A* to G. Girls significantly outperformed boys at the higher grades.
161. Pupils in both Years 7 to 9 and Years 10 to 11 achieve better than expected and there is a good level of progress. There is no significant difference in pupils' achievement in lessons according to their gender or ethnicity. Pupils have a good understanding of the rights and obligations of citizens in the local community. They can apply and balance criteria for the distribution of limited trust funds to competing charities.
162. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language achieve well. They gain the confidence to take part in discussion through the focused help of the learning support assistants. There is sufficient challenge in most lessons for gifted and talented pupils. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' social, moral and cultural development. Speaking and listening skills are well developed through the many opportunities for debate and group work in which all pupils are included. There are fewer opportunities for extended writing and for the use of ICT.
163. Teaching is good throughout the school and has improved since the last inspection. A major reason for this improvement is the subject organisation, based upon the skills of a small group of experienced teachers, including volunteers who are committed to this style of teaching and this approach to content. Lessons are well planned and use a wide range of interesting and topical resources. Teachers are sensitive to the cultural diversity in their classes and direct their questioning so as to encourage all to participate. Pupils are challenged to reflect and express their own opinions in an atmosphere of mutual respect. Teachers are very good role models and set high expectations of behaviour to which pupils respond with enthusiasm and interest. Homework and assessment are not yet used to indicate clearly what pupils must do to improve their work.
164. The subject has been given status through its very good leadership and management. Schemes of work are in place for all year groups and the programme is regularly monitored. The teachers work very well as a team, learning from each other and from the pupils.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

Leisure and tourism

165. Two lessons of this new GNVQ course were seen in Year 10. It meets the needs of the pupils well and standards in the work seen are already broadly in line with the national average. Achievement is above expectations, the result of good teaching and a challenging pace of work. Many more boys than girls have chosen the course but all achieve equally well, as do the few white pupils. All are responding well to the new demands of portfolio work and to the opportunities for group discussion. They use local resources well and research independently via the Internet. They edit and re-draft work well before their final presentation, which includes appropriate graphics. Leadership is very good and the course is a strength of the school.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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