

# INSPECTION REPORT

## LITTLE HEATH SCHOOL

Romford

LEA area: London Borough of Redbridge

Unique reference number: 102878

Headteacher: Mr P Johnson

Lead inspector: Mike Warman

Dates of inspection: 12 – 14 January 2004

Inspection number: 258936

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	11-19 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	133
School address:	Hainault Road Little Heath Romford Essex
Postcode:	RM6 5RX
Telephone number:	020 8599 4864
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr T Howl
Date of previous inspection:	13 March 2002

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Little Heath is a special school for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. In recent years the population has changed and the school also takes those with additional, more complex disabilities including autism, communication difficulties, emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. There are currently 133 pupils on roll from Year 7 to Year 13. The gender balance is 2:1 in favour of boys. Pupils come from the London Borough of Redbridge and neighbouring authorities. A high proportion (35%) of pupils are entitled to free school meals. A rich diversity of ethnic backgrounds are represented by the pupils including Indian, Pakistani and African backgrounds. Forty eight pupils speak English as an additional language. The main languages spoken are Punjabi, Gujarati and Urdu. The school also runs an outreach service for 84 pupils in local secondary schools.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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1395	Stuart Charlton	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
1370	Clive Halliwell	Team Inspector	Mathematics, citizenship, physical education, special educational needs
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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a good school with some very good features.** It is well led by the headteacher, senior staff and governors. Good teaching enables pupils to learn at a fast rate for their abilities. The school uses its resources well and provides good value for money.

#### The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve well;
- Teaching and learning are good;
- The headteacher has a clear vision for the school's development and has moved the school forward with a strong sense of purpose;
- The provision for and use of information and communication technology are excellent;
- Pupils are cared for very well;
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good;
- Opportunities to enrich the curriculum are very good;
- The procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and school self review are not rigorous enough;
- Arrangements for the assessment of pupils' performance and the use of such data are not consistent across the school;
- The criteria for entry to the Post-16 provision are not clearly defined.

The school has made good progress in many areas of its work since the last inspection. Opportunities for students to use their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects have increased. The school continues to evaluate and develop its approaches to ensure improved pupil behaviour and the policy and practice are good. The school now admits more pupils with complex needs, including autism, communication difficulties and emotional and behavioural difficulties and has established specific classes to meet their needs. The work of learning support assistants is effective and pupils have good opportunities to develop their independence skills in lessons and around the school in general. Much has been done to improve attendance, which is now satisfactory with many pupils attending regularly.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' achievement at the end of:	In relation to individual targets in:	
	Subjects of the curriculum	personal and social education
Year 9	<b>Good</b>	<b>Very Good</b>
Year 11	<b>Good</b>	<b>Very Good</b>
Year 13	<b>Good</b>	<b>Very Good</b>

*Inspectors make judgements in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor.*

**Achievement is good.** Many pupils make good progress in most subjects and meet targets set for them in their individual education plans (IEPs). Pupils' achievements in personal, social, health and citizenship education are very good. In English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, religious education and French pupils' achievements are good. By Year 11, pupils achieve good standards for their abilities in externally accredited courses. Students at Post-16 do well in their studies and achieve good results in their assessments. The majority continue with further education or work placements when they leave school. In the other subjects that were sampled in this inspection, pupils make good progress with the exception of music where progress is satisfactory. Pupils demonstrate **very good** personal qualities including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Their attitudes to learning are very good and attendance is satisfactory.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. Teaching and learning are **good**. A significant proportion of the teaching seen was very good or excellent. Teaching is good in English, mathematics and science. It is very good in information and communication technology, French and personal, social, health and citizenship education. Teaching in the Post-16 provision is good. Pupils learn effectively in all these important areas. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects they teach and manage their classes well. Learning support assistants work very well with the teachers to the benefit of the pupils.

The curriculum is good and pupils are very well cared for. The curriculum offers a rich range of activities and meets the needs of a diverse population well. This helps pupils to learn well and be well prepared for the next stage of their education or the world of work. The provision in all subjects is at least satisfactory and in most it is good. The provision in French, information and communication technology, religious education and personal, social, health and citizenship education is very good. The way the curriculum is enriched is very good. The Post-16 curriculum provision is good and meets the needs of the students well. Links with parents, other schools and the community are good.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are **good**. The leadership of the headteacher and the senior management team is good leading to effective school improvement. The headteacher provides a clear direction for the work of the school and is determined that all pupils should achieve as well as they can. The way the school is managed ensures that it runs smoothly. Excellent use is made of information and communication technology to support the management of the school. The governance of the school is good. The governors fulfil their statutory duties and support the school well.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Parents are pleased with the school and the progress their children make. They feel their children are achieving well and are happy. They are positive about all aspects of its work and are pleased with the help they receive. The pupils are proud of and like their school and feel it helps them a lot in many different ways. They wear their school uniform with pride and are pleased to belong to the community of Little Heath.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- the monitoring of teaching and learning and making school self review more systematic and rigorous;
- the consistency in the use of assessment procedures throughout the school;
- clarification of the entry criteria for the Post-16 provision.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses**

Pupils attending the school have all been identified as having special educational needs. It is inappropriate to compare their attainment with pupils of a similar age in mainstream schools. Students attain good standards and achieve well for their abilities in all subjects of the curriculum.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

##### **Pupils achieve well in:**

- English and French.
- Mathematics and science.
- Information and communication technology.
- Physical education.
- Religious education, art and design, design and technology, history and geography.
- Externally accredited courses including entry level GCSE courses, GCSE courses and ASDAN Youth Award Scheme.

##### **Pupils achieve very well in:**

- Personal and social development and citizenship

#### **Commentary**

1. Students in Years 7 to 13 achieve good standards in relation to their previous attainment and assessed needs. They make good progress in most areas of the curriculum and regularly succeed in meeting targets relevant to their particular special educational need. By the end of Year 11, most students achieve passes in externally accredited courses. Higher achieving students achieve pass grades in the GCSE examinations. Other students achieve pass grades in entry level courses designed for students working below GCSE level. By the end of Year 13, students are confident to move on to the world of work or to attend courses at local colleges. Most have achieved good passes in the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) vocational courses.

2. Achievement in English, mathematics, science and religious education is good across the school. In information and communication technology, it is also good and for some pupils very good. Although there are twice as many boys than girls in the school this does not affect the achievement of girls and they make good progress in relation to their needs. Pupils from different ethnic backgrounds also achieve as well as other pupils. All pupils make very good progress in their personal and social development and citizenship.

3. In lessons in Years 7 to 9 pupils always learn something new. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve which results in them achieving well. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 make good progress. The pupils follow examination courses selected to reflect their abilities and they make good progress towards the success criteria identified in the course programme. Many achieve very creditable results. In Years 12 and 13, all students leave the school with the qualification which is best matched to their needs. The programmes which are provided enable students to continue to make the good and for some students, the very good, progress they made in Years 7 to 11. This represents good and very good achievement for these students.

4. Pupils with additional special educational needs, such as those with complex communication difficulties or those with emotional and behavioural difficulties, make good progress overall. The school makes very good use of performance data to monitor the individual progress of



all pupils using its computer system. Pupils who have complex communication difficulties make good progress as their programmes are well planned to meet their needs and the teaching reflects their specific needs well. The school has a very positive ethos about meeting the needs of pupils with increasingly complex needs and is successful in ensuring the curriculum is delivered to reflect the learning needs of all.

5. The trend in achievement is good and reflects the changing profile of the pupil population. Since the last inspection, the range of special educational needs that the school caters for has changed. The school has continued to extend the range of externally accredited courses it offers to meet these changing needs. This supports and promotes the good achievement of pupils by the time they leave school.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils' attitudes and values are very good and the school's provision for their personal development is very effective. Their relationships with each other and with adults are very good. Attendance is satisfactory overall and a significant number of pupils have made considerable improvement in their attendance since joining the school. Throughout the school, behaviour is good. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Across the school, attendance rates are satisfactory overall. Many pupils have made considerable improvements in their behaviour since joining the school.
- All pupils have very positive attitudes to learning which make a strong contribution to their achievement.
- Throughout the school, relationships are very good and the school is effective in promoting racial harmony.
- Personal development is very good.
- The school's strategies for improving behaviour are effective, resulting in relatively few exclusions for this type of school. Behaviour is never less than good and in formal situations it is very good.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is very good.

### **Commentary**

6. Since the inspection in 2000, attendance at the school has improved and for the last three years has been around 90 per cent. To achieve this level, the school has encouraged attendance and followed up absences rigorously and has made significant efforts to get pupils and their parents to appreciate the benefits of good attendance. Last term nearly ten percent of the school population achieved full attendance. This represents a significant improvement in their attendance for many pupils. The school's attendance certificates and the rewards these bring are greatly prized by pupils. The systems for monitoring attendance and following up absence are very good with all parents being contacted early on the first day of absence.

7. The majority of pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and are very well motivated. The school's use of information and communication technology to underpin and support the learning of pupils makes a particularly important impact on their attitudes and motivation. Overwhelmingly, pupils are very proud of their school and support it very well when they are on the premises and when they are in the community. They are confident and form constructive relationships with other pupils and with teachers. They respond well when they are given opportunities to exercise responsibility. Good examples of this include the mentors who help others with computing problems. Also, the sixth form students support younger pupils in the school through the weekly waste paper collection, the proceeds from which help to fund the Breakfast Club.

8. A significant number of pupils have behavioural difficulties and the school places strong emphasis through its personal and social education provision to enable them to manage their own behaviour effectively. The success of this ensures that behaviour around the school is good overall and in formal situations such as assemblies it is very good. The school has good policies on behaviour management, with appropriate sanctions and rewards. Pupils are polite and friendly and get on well with each other. Relationships within the whole school community are a strength. Whilst no bullying was seen during the inspection, pupils confirmed that, although it sometimes occurs it is dealt with quickly and effectively. The school makes the prevention of bullying a high priority. Inappropriate behaviour in lessons is rare and not only staff, but pupils, contribute very well to managing such situations if they do occur. A significantly strong feature of the school is the existence of a racially harmonious atmosphere. The management of the dining arrangements is very good, ensuring that lunchtimes are very pleasant occasions and make a very positive contribution to the social development of pupils.

9. The school does much to promote the personal development of pupils and they behave with increasing maturity and understanding as they move through the school. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is very good. Spiritual development is encouraged through religious education and the opportunities for reflection during assembly each day. Pupils have good opportunities to consider issues such as controlling aggression. The wide range of ethnic backgrounds within the school ensures a broad discussion and awareness of the values and beliefs of others. Moral development is fundamental to the school's ethos and all pupils know right from wrong and the importance of trust and respect. The school is aware that social opportunities for many pupils are limited and provides a very wide range of activities to address this. There are regular trips out of school linked to the curriculum, for example, to art galleries, museums or the London Eye. In addition, residential trips, such as the yearly trip to France, are very popular, as are other events such as the Valentine's Disco being organized by the Post-16 students. Opportunities for pupils to take responsibilities, both within lessons and through activities such as the school council, are good.

## 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	73	13	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	4	2	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	12	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	13	1	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	4	0	0
Black or Black British – African	9	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	6	0	0

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

10. Pupils are excluded for fixed periods only in extreme circumstances. Many systems are in place to prevent this happening and the home-school community development officer works very effectively with pupils experiencing difficulties. However, in spite of all the efforts and support, a minority of pupils have to be excluded for short periods.



## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good. Teaching and learning and the curriculum are good and ensure that pupils achieve as well as they can. Assessment is satisfactory. Pupils are very well cared for and are provided with good guidance and support. The school has good links with parents, other schools, colleges and the community to support pupils' education in its wider context.

### Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning for pupils of all ages, backgrounds and abilities is good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff have high expectations and manage behaviour well.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge.
- Learning support assistants contribute significantly to the good progress pupils make.
- All staff have very good relationships with pupils.
- The effective use of assessment is inconsistent.

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 61 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2(3%)	21(34%)	30(49%)	8(14%)	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.*

11. Overall, teaching is good with a significant amount of very good teaching, and a small amount that is excellent.

12. The best teaching was seen when teachers make it clear to pupils what is expected of them in a lesson and what it is hoped they will achieve. In Years 10 and 11 it is also made clear to pupils how the lesson content will help them achieve well in the qualifications they are working towards, which is particularly effective in motivating pupils as they have a desire to succeed. Consequently, most pupils respond positively to the realistic challenge of these well-planned lessons.

13. Detailed planning and preparation is helping teachers to conduct lessons that flow at a good pace and interest pupils successfully. Staff insist on high standards of behaviour and most have good expertise with regards to behaviour management. This, linked to the school's strategies for supporting staff, leads to a good response from pupils.

14. Teaching in Years 7 to 11 is good with very good features. All teachers are subject specialists and share their enthusiasm for their subjects with the pupils. Lessons are generally well planned and appropriate resources are used well to stimulate and interest pupils. Objectives for lessons are identified in lesson planning. In those subjects where the objectives are sharp and clear they support learning very well. Pupils benefit from the positive relationships developed by the staff and the constant encouragement to persist with and improve their work when it proves challenging. Teachers recognise pupils' differing abilities and give as much attention as possible to meeting their individual needs. The result is that most pupils develop confidence and achieve well.

15. The work of the learning support assistants throughout the school contributes significantly to the quality of teaching seen and the learning opportunities provided for the pupils. They are effective when working with individuals or small groups of pupils.

16. Although teachers regularly assess pupils' work and give helpful comments it is not always made clear how they can improve their work and what they have to do to achieve the next stage of their learning. Assessment is less effective where the objectives for lessons are not specific. The use teachers make of the results of their assessments to inform individual pupils' targets and lesson planning is inconsistent.

## **The curriculum**

A good, broad and balanced curriculum is provided for the pupils. Staffing and resources are good and the accommodation is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The very good Personal, Social, Health Education and Citizenship Programme.
- There is a very good range of additional activities which enrich the curriculum well.
- The very good curriculum provision for information and communication technology.
- There is good provision for pupils with complex communication difficulties.
- There is a good number of teachers and support staff.
- The lack of coherence in the music curriculum has an impact on pupils' achievements.
- The internal accommodation for physical education is poor.

### **Commentary**

17. The school is now providing for pupils with much more diverse needs, as well as those with moderate learning difficulties. Three key changes have been introduced since the last inspection. These include the establishment of three classes, one for pupils in Years 7 to 9, one for Years 10 and 11 and one for Years 12 and 13, with complex communication needs. This means that they can spend more time with their form tutor in the tutor group base. Also, class tutors have been given the responsibility for the teaching of literacy and personal, social, health education and citizenship. These developments have been implemented well and ensure all pupils are provided with a broad and balanced curriculum, which includes the National Curriculum, religious education, careers guidance and work experience. The school's focus on the development of literacy is also enhanced through the weekly Social Use of Language Programme (SULP). Whilst suitable musical experiences are being provided for pupils the absence of a specialist teacher for this area of the curriculum inhibits the development of a coherent music curriculum.

18. Pupils in Years 10, 11, 12 and 13 are able to follow GCSE courses in a few subjects, where this is appropriate, as well as following other accredited courses, for example, the ASDAN bronze, silver and gold awards. Overall, the learning opportunities are good, relevant to their needs and interests and provide good opportunities for pupils to study vocational subjects and to have their learning accredited. Plans for learning are well linked to course requirements and this ensures that pupils build on previous learning and make good progress. There are good opportunities for pupils to participate in work related learning and there are effective links with the local college which prepare pupils well for the next stage of their learning, or for a few pupils, entering the workplace.

19. Subject plans provide teachers with good guidance about the knowledge and skills pupils need to learn throughout their time in the school. They have been developed and adapted to reflect current requirements and meet the needs of the majority of pupils. In particular, the development of the school's Intranet has increased staff's accessibility to such subject plans and has provided a very rich reservoir of resources and ideas contributed by other staff and the pupils themselves. These developments are already having a positive impact on pupils' learning.

20. The school recognises and deals with pupils' special educational needs well. A very good programme of learning for personal, social and health education has been recently developed. It includes suitable modules about citizenship and includes good careers education and guidance for pupils. Care has been taken to ensure that statutory requirements are met in these programmes,

that staff who deliver them are trained and supported appropriately, and that other areas of the curriculum support specific modules of the programme for such elements as drugs and sex education. These learning opportunities make a significant contribution to pupils' personal development.

21. Learning is further enriched by a wide range of well-planned activities such as residential visits, including an annual three day visit to Paris for the older pupils. Visits to cultural centres and places of worship, the Wordfest summer event, and the school's own music group called Culture Mix do much to extend pupils' experiences. There are very good opportunities for pupils to participate in sporting activities as part of the learning opportunities provided in physical education. Through working with other providers additional activities such as sailing and golf have been included within the curriculum and the school's swimming programme is highly developed.

22. The school provides a good range of activities for pupils at lunchtime which reflect their interests. These help to reinforce the learning they have done in the classroom. The ICT club is particularly popular but many pupils also participate eagerly within the various games clubs and the school choir.

23. The number of teachers and support staff is good; teachers are well qualified and have good subject knowledge. This is capitalised upon effectively through most teaching being undertaken by subject specialists. Learning Support Assistants are effectively deployed and make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. They work well with teachers thus forming strong teams. Staff are well supported and have been well prepared for changes, such as class tutors taking on the responsibility for the teaching of literacy and personal, social and health education and citizenship.

24. Overall, the resources to support pupils' learning are good. They are particularly good in science, and religious education where parents contribute many artefacts, and very good in information and communication technology. The accommodation is made up of three main separate buildings and several separate temporary buildings. Whilst this is far from ideal, subjects such as science, design and technology, food technology and information and communication technology are taught in well- equipped rooms and the Post-16 provision has a suitable suite of rooms. The small hall is inadequate and is a poor resource for physical education. Overall, the accommodation is satisfactory.

## **Care, guidance and support**

The provision which the school makes for the care, guidance and support of its pupils is good overall. The procedures which are in place to care for pupils and ensure their general welfare are very effective. There are systems in place to monitor pupils' achievements and personal development but these are not used as well as they could be on a day-to-day basis. The school undertakes regular analysis of pupils' views and acts on these appropriately.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Each pupil is known well as an individual and has the personal support of their class tutor.
- The school community has a strong ethos of mutual support and respect.
- Relationships between all in the school community are very good.
- Induction arrangements for pupils new to the school are good.
- Very good procedures exist for monitoring and promoting good attendance and behaviour.
- Health and Safety arrangements are very good.
- The school council is very effective.

## **Commentary**

25. Little Heath is a very caring school where pupils have a sense of belonging. The quality of support and care offered to pupils is very good and the relationship between staff and pupils is one

that all can be proud of. The mosaic tree made by staff and pupils at the front of the school represents this. Induction arrangements are good, for example, all pupils are visited at home and those coming from a primary school are visited in Year 6 before joining the school. The very effective school council is instrumental in bringing about change and ensuring that the views of the pupils are taken seriously, for example, they successfully voted for and gained the governing body agreement to have a uniform policy. The members of the school council believe they can make a difference.

26. The school provides a tranquil environment where adults and pupils feel safe and secure, and rightly so. Risk assessments are carried out regularly. The responsible person for health and safety ensures that the governing body is aware of any issues and action taken. There are effective procedures for medicines, school trips and off-site activities. The school accommodation is well cared for. Appropriate procedures are in place to eliminate or minimize hazards within and beyond the school. The design and lay-out of the playground provides pupils with a good range of activities. Supervision at break times is very good.

27. Very good child protection procedures are in place and are understood and practised by all staff. Child protection is very well organised by the home and community development officer who is the nominated child protection officer. The school receives good support from the local authority agencies.

28. The school's procedures to ensure pupils' care and guidance are good. They are grounded in the very good relationships between pupils and adults. This is demonstrated through the firm and sensitive support given to individuals who are experiencing a temporary difficulty in participating in school life and learning. Staff are consistent in their approach to these difficulties in line with school policy for managing behaviour. There is effective formal monitoring of progress in learning which contributes to the clear, well-structured Individual Education Plans. These are used to inform planning for individual pupils in lessons, although this is not consistent throughout the school. Pupils are enabled to be active partners in the life of the school, for example, through the use of the Intranet, which is a particular strength. The wide range of cultures represented in the school is valued and pupils from all backgrounds are well included in all activities.

## **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

Relationships between the school and parents are good. The information the school provides to parents is of a high standard. There are good links with other schools, colleges and the local community, this positive aspect of the school raises standards and enhances learning.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The provision of very good information for parents.
- Good partnership with the local schools and the community.
- The outreach service provides good quality specialist support to secondary schools.

### **Commentary**

29. Parents receive very good information about the school and how their children are doing. A regular flow of information via the home-school diary is informative, well structured and of high quality.

30. The school has good links with the community, other schools and colleges. The employment of the home-school community development officer has been instrumental in developing this aspect of the school's work. The headteacher and the deputy headteachers are very receptive to parents and to their concerns. Before starting at the school, all parents and their children receive a visit from a member of staff. This contributes positively to a smooth transition and also strengthens the relationship between home and school. Parents appreciate the help given to

them, for example, through the home-school community development officer. The home-school diary bridges the gap between home and school. Parents at the parent meeting said they value the links the diary provides. Due to the distance many pupils travel to school few parents help in school. However, a support group for parents and a course in conjunction with Redbridge Learning Institute on English as a second language was well received.

31. Visits are made into surrounding schools by the school's music group Culture Mix. These visits positively enhance the cultural dimension of the school. Visitors to the school include celebrities, local artists and dancers. Past pupils are pleased to come back and talk about their experiences.

32. The quality of information is good. The school prospectus is informative and the governors' report to parents meets statutory requirements. Parents' views are sought through questionnaires and their responses are taken seriously; the recent survey shows a high level of parents satisfaction. Complaints are dealt with effectively. Annual reports of pupils' progress are of a good standard.

33. Links with the community are good and the school makes good use of its surrounding neighbours. Visits to Capel Manor, West Ham F.C, Wellgate Farm and Epping Forest Conservation Centre enhance the curriculum and are valuable sources for work experience. A range of charitable groups working with families of children who have special educational needs is supported by the school.

34. Partnerships with local schools and colleges are good. For example, through the specialist school status with Seven Kings High School the school gains good support. Links with colleges of further education are effective in ensuring a smooth transition for pupils when they leave the school.

## **OUTREACH SERVICE**

35. The Outreach Service works with a total of 84 pupils in 16 secondary schools; nine of which are supported by specialist teachers from both parts of the service, language and communication, and learning difficulties. The head of service manages nine teachers, four full-time and five part-time, who spend all their working time in the secondary schools.

36. The nature and level of support provided depends mainly on pupils' statements of special educational needs and this support is funded through the local authority. In addition, some schools take up the option to buy in a specific package of consultancy to meet their particular need. In all cases, the type of support is agreed initially between the secondary school special educational needs co-ordinator and the head of service. This support is then monitored at regular intervals, it is reviewed formally and its effectiveness is evaluated. The provision from the language and communication service meets individual needs very well; the learning difficulties service is less effective in meeting schools' needs overall. The range of support options include: in-class support, withdrawal, specialist help, in-service training and adaption of learning resources.

37. Assessment evidence indicates that the outreach work impacts significantly on a range of areas. Schools confirm that supported pupils make improvements in social skills, emotional security, confidence and self-esteem leading to better behaviour and increased attendance. Pupils engage more with their learning in class and many improve their standards of attainment, particularly in literacy. These improvements are incremental, often over several years, and they are most marked when the support is provided consistently, by the same specialist teacher with the appropriate expertise.

38. Teachers in the Outreach Service have many areas of expertise and a number of special interests. These include language disorders, specific learning difficulties, dyslexia, autistic spectrum disorders and social use of language, the latter being a popular development in secondary schools. Most specialist teachers provide a high quality service and they bring new ideas and resources to the schools. These are well used and valued by mainstream teachers and support assistants. Such specialist teachers become well integrated with the school and liaison with other staff is frequent and



productive. They are involved in regular dialogue with staff about teaching strategies and behaviour management. They keep their knowledge, skills and understanding up to date through regular professional development. A small minority of the outreach teachers lack initiative and have a narrow repertoire of specialist skills, making them less effective in schools.

39. The Outreach Service is well managed, organisation is very efficient and the staff are well deployed. They liaise effectively with the parents of the pupils they are supporting, at formal reviews and more frequently by telephone, meetings, home/school book entry or e mail. They enable pupils to make successful transfers to mainstream schools. There is appropriate liaison, where relevant and possible, with other agencies such as speech therapists and educational psychologists. The outreach support handbook provides a good level of information about administrative and practical issues. A recent internal evaluation of the service has been carried out using questionnaires and visits. The outcome of this evaluation was positive overall and detailed the strengths and the areas for development. In general, these coincide with the findings of the inspection. In addition to wanting more time from the language and communication teachers, which is a funding issue, schools required a higher level of expertise in dealing with learning difficulties from some of the teachers. Overall, staff and pupils in schools could benefit more from the Outreach Service. Secondary schools would gain from a greater sharing of the expertise that exists at Little Heath School.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The school is well led. The leadership of the headteacher and key staff is good. Governance is good and management is satisfactory, but the systems to manage the school are good overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher provides clear vision and a strong sense of purpose.
- The school ensures pupils with many different needs are included well.
- Staff work well as a team and show good levels of commitment to future improvement.
- Governors are effective in helping to shape the direction of the school.
- Financial planning is good.
- Excellent use is made of ICT to support the management of the school.
- The programme for self-evaluation is not systematic enough.

### **Commentary**

40. The headteacher and key staff provide effective leadership. The headteacher sets out a clear vision for the school based on a strong belief that 'each pupil should be given every opportunity to achieve of their best'. The members of the senior management team have good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the provision and also about the ways in which further improvements might take place. They have developed a good working relationship with everyone working in the school and established an effective whole-school team that is committed to continuous improvement. The school has made good improvement since the time of the last inspection. However, the procedures for self-review and evaluation are not sufficiently analytical or systematic to take the next step, that is from being a 'good school' to being a 'very good school'.

41. There is a strong commitment to ensuring that the school is inclusive of all and this is evident in practice. Pupils with a wide range of needs, backgrounds and different home languages are all valued members of the community. Overall, the school's leadership ensures a very positive climate for learning.

42. The governing body is effective. Governors have a strong interest in the school and have worked hard to achieve improvement since the last inspection. They have established good procedures and effectively fulfil their statutory duties. Governors are aware of changing requirements in education. They attend training to keep up-to-date so that they are well placed to make decisions. Governors are developing systems to monitor and evaluate the standards the

pupils achieve, the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning but, as yet, these are not sufficiently systematic.

43. Financial planning is good and the school makes good use of its available resources. Spending decisions are linked closely to educational priorities and there is a carefully organised programme of staff development to support future improvement. Resources are good overall and specific grants are used effectively. The school works appropriately to the principles of best value, for example comparisons are made with other schools in terms of spending and a good level of consultation and comparison of price takes place before major decisions are made. There is effective financial control and administration and the recommendations of the latest auditor's report have been acted upon appropriately.

44. Excellent use is made of information and communication technology to support the management of the school. It is used as a communication system whereby pupils and staff contribute information of interest for all, for example, about all the subjects of the curriculum. Meetings, incidents of unacceptable behaviour, important events are just a few of the other items that are logged. An analysis of this sort of information provides a vital tool to aid in decision making.

45. Generally, however, the school's self-evaluation procedures are not sufficiently well developed, particularly with regard to the quality of teaching and pupils' learning. A great deal of monitoring takes place but it is too informal and there is not sufficient analysis of information to draw out patterns and trends in performance that emerge over time. The school has recognised these issues and highlighted them as key areas for improvement in the school improvement plan.

## SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4

### ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

#### English

Provision for English and Literacy is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils make good progress with reading and spoken language so that they become effective communicators.
- Subject planning is good for both English and Literacy. This supports teachers who are teaching the subjects, particularly those who are non-specialists.
- The librarian provides very good support for the management of English and Literacy by managing the resources for the subject as well as ensuring that the library is an inviting and well-organised working space with a good range of resources including information and communication technology.
- The impact of provision for literacy which ensures that all pupils have the opportunity to develop their literacy skills in order to better access other curriculum areas, for example through the emphasis on learning key vocabulary to be used in that subject. Pupils respond positively to these sessions.
- The development of pupils' writing skills is not addressed as rigorously as reading or speaking and listening.
- The marking of pupils' work is positive and encouraging but does not always help them to understand what they need to do to improve their work.
- The progress of pupils with more significant needs is not tracked systematically.

#### Commentary

46. Many pupils enter the school with low levels of reading ability but the results of the annual reading tests indicate that they make good progress. This results from the strong focus on developing reading through individual work on a planned programme. This enables pupils to learn strategies to tackle unfamiliar words. The weekly reading lesson gives pupils the opportunity to work at their own level on an individual basis with an adult. Pupils respond well to these sessions in which they operate independently because they are familiar with the routines and expectations. Targets for the development of basic literacy skills are included in every pupil's Individual Education Plan and pupils are aware of their own learning targets in this area. This enables them to become active partners in the process of their own learning. Parents are strongly encouraged to support their children's reading by ensuring that they read regularly with an adult at home and this is systematically followed up in school to ensure that all pupils get the benefit of this experience. However, less progress is made in developing writing skills because insufficient emphasis is put on this aspect of the subject.

47. There are no discernible differences of achievement between the various ethnic groups or girls and boys.

48. Teaching is good overall. It is lively and interesting so that most pupils are keen to participate. They usually settle quickly to their work and concentrate well. The Key Stage 3 Strategy has been used effectively to provide a framework for teaching literacy to all pupils on a daily basis. Training has been provided through the local education authority and in school to ensure that all teachers involved in delivering the literacy sessions have the necessary skills. This results in literacy being taught well. Most teachers share learning objectives for the lesson with pupils at the beginning so that they know what they are expected to achieve in the lesson. Marking is positive and encouraging but does not always provide pupils with information to help them improve or to inform

other adults about the next steps. Marking is therefore not being used consistently to support the process of matching teaching to pupils' individual needs and to monitor their progress.

49. The library is at the centre of provision for English. It is a good resource. It is well organised using the Dewey system so that pupils can learn how to access books in any library. There is a wide-ranging provision of fiction and non fiction although some of the books are old and well worn. The librarian provides very good support for the management of English and Literacy by organising resources. There is a daily lunchtime club in the library that is well attended and popular with pupils.

50. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The subject plans are clear and detailed. They provide for clear progression and good coverage of the subject in the context of the Key Stage 3 Strategy and accreditation in Year 11. There is a commitment to the development of further use of ICT in English and an interactive whiteboard has already been installed for this purpose although it is not yet extensively used. The subject leader has not yet begun to formally monitor the quality of teaching and learning in the subject but is aware of the need to develop this aspect of management through observation of teaching, work scrutiny and further use of the available data on achievement.

51. At the time of the last inspection in 2002 Literacy was identified as an area for further development. Since that time good progress has been made in ensuring that all pupils are given the opportunity to develop their literacy skills so that they can gain access to other areas of the curriculum.

## **FRENCH**

The provision for French across the school is very **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- All pupils are fully included in lessons and there is no difference in progress between boys or girls and those of different ethnic groups.
- Pupils make good progress and achieve well.
- Teaching is very good, supported by very good subject knowledge.
- The subject is very well led and managed.

### **Commentary**

52. Pupils demonstrate their good achievement through their oral contributions during lessons and through the results of their work for the entry level certificate. They are learning to speak and understand French and ask and answer questions about such topics as greetings, foods and drinks and occupations. Most have a good knowledge of numbers, days of the week and the basic vocabulary they have used.

53. Teaching is enthusiastic with a brisk pace and appropriate emphasis on the target language. Opportunities are given for paired, group work and independent learning and a good range of activities ensures that all pupils retain their interest well. Relationships are very good. Teaching assistants support pupils' access to the subject well.

54. Planning is very good and teaching methods make good use of audio visual resources such as the interactive white board, tape recording and the overhead projector. Very effective questioning and prompting give pupils confidence to use their knowledge of the language and effectively monitor pupils' understanding. There is particularly effective assessment of pupils' achievements and lesson evaluation to ensure the learning environment is the most productive for all pupils' needs. Planning takes account of students' individual education plans and specifically identified targets are addressed within lessons.

55. Leadership of the subject ensures that it has a high profile within the curriculum of the school and supports pupils' language development very well. Activities such as the annual trip to France ensure that pupils have opportunities to use what they learn in real situations.

## **MATHEMATICS**

The provision for mathematics is **satisfactory** overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The majority of teaching is good and is directly responsible for the good quality of learning.
- Learning support assistants are well deployed and effective in supporting pupils' learning.
- The development plan is too new to have had an impact on the quality of provision.
- The level of challenge does not always meet the range of needs and abilities of all pupils in a group.
- The emphasis on the development of the correct mathematical vocabulary is good.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are good.

### **Commentary**

56. Throughout the school the majority of pupils are achieving well and a high proportion are being entered for the end of Year 9 tests and GCSE Entry Qualifications this year. The majority of pupils show good progress with the highest levels of attainment being obtained in their number work which is given due prominence in the mathematics curriculum. There are no discernible differences of achievement between the various ethnic groups or girls and boys. The development of the classes for pupils with complex communication needs means that all pupils are effectively included in lessons.

57. The good progress identified in the previous inspection report has been maintained. The overall quality of teaching is good throughout the school. The particular strengths of the teaching are:

- the pace at which the sessions are conducted;
- the deployment and utilisation of learning support assistants;
- the use of learning support assistants to record pupils' achievements and answers during sessions;
- brisk mental warm-up activities at the start of lessons;
- knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject;
- well-directed questioning of pupils to ascertain their learning; and
- the management of pupils' behaviour.

Weaknesses which require attention include:

- a lack of additional tasks to challenge those pupils who complete their work before their classmates;
- the quality of short-term lesson plans, when they do not focus on individual pupils' needs and do not specifically relate to pupils' individual learning plans; and
- plenary sessions so that they relate more specifically to the objectives of the lesson.

58. Pupils generally enjoy their mathematics lessons. Pupils throughout the school frequently work very well together showing good levels of co-operation and the ability to sustain interest over a long period of time. This was particularly noticeable when pupils were using computers. On occasions, when working with computers and on other mathematical tasks, they were reluctant to have-a-go, wanting the re-assurance of staff before attempting a problem. However, on most

occasions staff got the balance correct between providing this support and insisting that the pupil undertook the task themselves.

59. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The subject leader has worked hard to ensure that a new mathematical scheme which is appropriate to the needs of the pupils is successfully introduced. This has assisted staff with medium term planning and recording pupils' achievements but the monitoring procedures do not yet ensure that assessment records are maintained consistently and in a way that identifies more clearly the small gains in knowledge and understanding that pupils acquire. The very recent production of an action plan, which contains many of the points raised in this inspection, provides a clear way forward for key developments including improvements in mathematical resources, a request made to the inspection team by members of the school council.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

60. Since the last inspection good progress has been made in promoting the use of numeracy across the curriculum. This is particularly evident in the work of pupils in science, ICT, Food Technology and history through the element of measuring. Such an approach now needs to embrace other elements of numeracy, for example, data handling.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision for science is **good** overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Throughout the school pupils achieve well. They attain above the levels expected for their ability in public examinations.
- Teaching is consistently good and often very good.
- Teachers are enthusiastic about their subject and make lessons very interesting.
- Facilities and resources for undertaking practical work are good and provide plenty of opportunities for pupils to carry out investigations.
- The subject leader supports other staff who teach science very well but the procedures to review and evaluate the overall effectiveness of the provision are not sufficiently systematic.
- The use of marking, self-assessment and peer assessment is not used consistently well with all groups.

### **Commentary**

61. Pupils' achievements in all year groups are good with particularly good achievement in practical and investigative work. During the past few years there has been lack of continuity in staffing and the subject leader has given very good support, especially to the Year 9 and Year 11 groups, to ensure that pupils achieve of their best in the end of Year 9 tests and in GCSE. As a result pupils have attained above the levels normally expected in these examinations and the good improvement noted at the last inspection has been maintained. There is no difference in the achievement of boys and girls of different abilities or ethnic groups.

62. Teachers have a good knowledge of their subject and this, together with good understanding of the pupils' needs, ensures that the work undertaken is well matched to pupils' levels of understanding. Teachers' expectations are high and they manage pupils' behaviour very well. A key focus is given to pupils using correct scientific language and they respond well to this with Year 11 showing good understanding of words such as 'chromosome'. Pupils in all year groups clearly enjoy science. They show initiative, take good responsibility for their own learning and respect the laboratory safety rules, for example when a Year 9 class used iodine solution safely as part of a test for starch in food.

63. Planning is undertaken conscientiously and includes clear objectives which are shared with pupils at the start of lessons. Assessment information is used well to take account of pupils' individual needs but best use is not always made of teachers' marking and pupils' own assessment of their work to help them understand what they need to do to improve. Pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy are developed well in science lessons.

64. Subject leadership is good overall. The subject leader ensures that staff are given very good levels of support. Resources are good and carefully maintained. The wide range of plants and animals is a particularly good resource. The action plan for the future is well thought out but the procedures for self-review and evaluation are not sufficiently analytical or systematic. Very good use is made of ICT, both to support pupils' learning and to help manage the department.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in information and communication technology is **excellent**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The development and use of the school Intranet as a resource for learning and as a management tool is outstanding.
- All pupils make at least good progress and for many, progress is very good. This enables them to achieve well and many achieve very well.
- Most pupils gain an appropriate qualification in public examinations at the end of Year 11 and the standards which they attain in GCSE examinations are better than would be expected for their abilities.
- The quality of teaching is never less than very good and contributes very well to the standards which pupils attain.
- The skills which pupils develop to use ICT to support their studies are well above those which would be expected for their abilities. Nevertheless, the identification and monitoring of opportunities for pupils to use their ICT skills in other subjects of the curriculum are not sufficiently systematic.
- The management of the subject is excellent.
- The accommodation and resources are good and are used very well to support and develop the skills of pupils; particularly noteworthy is the use made of the interactive whiteboards.

### **Commentary**

65. Information and communication technology is fundamental to the school's ethos, and great attention is given to developing pupils' skills so that they can use modern technology and computer-based systems as tools to provide access for learning across the curriculum. In addition, the school and in particular the ICT co-ordinator and the network manager, have developed the content and use of the school's Intranet as an outstanding resource for learning and recording pupils' achievements. Equally outstanding is the parallel development of the Intranet as a management tool for all aspects of school life.

66. Pupils in Years 7 to 11 achieve well and for many their achievements are very good. All pupils are entered for a nationally recognized qualification in Year 11, either through Entry Level qualifications or for GCSE. Most are entered for the short course GCSE examination in Information Technology (IT). In the academic years 2000 to 2003, the quality of the work which pupils completed for the coursework component of this course was at least in line with that which would be expected nationally (GCSE grade C) and often it was better (GCSE grade B). However, the overall standards which pupils attained were adversely affected by their performance in the tested component of the qualification. The school now gives high priority to developing pupils' examination skills and techniques and, during the inspection, it was clear that this strategy is helping to improve their performance. Those pupils entered for Entry Level qualifications attained the top level, Level 3.

67. The teaching seen was never less than very good, with many aspects which were excellent. A particularly important factor in the quality of the teaching is the level of subject knowledge which teachers possess. This combined with their very good knowledge of the needs of the pupils ensures that all pupils make at least good progress and for many their progress is very good. Teachers' planning is very good based on a very good scheme of work which has been developed to ensure that pupils' information and communication technology skills are developed to provide access to the curriculum and support their learning, but also that the requirements of the qualifications they will take in Years 10 and 11 are not neglected. All pupils develop their own websites on the school Intranet and they use these very well to share ideas, work and learning. This is important and highly effective in developing their self-esteem and their confidence in using modern technology to support their learning.

68. The management of information and communication technology by the subject co-ordinator is excellent but he is extremely well supported by the network manager who is critical to the success of the development of the school Intranet. The co-ordinator has a very clear view about how information and communication technology can and should be used with pupils who have special educational needs in order to provide them with high quality learning opportunities which give them access to the curriculum and enhance their life skills. He has communicated this view to his colleagues very effectively indeed and with their support and the help of the network manager is translating this vision into the reality of the school's Intranet. The accommodation and resources are good. However, the use which is made of these is very good. Often there are queues of pupils wishing to use the facilities for study and recreational purposes at lunchtime and at the after-school IT Youth Clubs, which many parents attend.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

69. All staff, pupils and students make very good use of information and communication technology in the subjects of the curriculum and in all subjects it is seen as a crucial tool in developing pupils' and students' learning and self-esteem. Through the training that has been provided and through the excellent support which can be accessed quickly through the use of the Intranet, every teacher uses it effectively within their teaching. Every member of staff and each subject area has a website on the Intranet and the range of audio, visual and written resources available is huge and is continually updated. In addition the bank of evidence about all aspects of school life is exceptional. However, although opportunities for the use of technology are identified and used in all subject areas there is no formal system to evaluate and monitor the effectiveness of the ways in which these are used. The subject co-ordinator rightly sees this as a next step in the development of the provision.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **GEOGRAPHY**

It was only possible to undertake a small number of observations in geography but consideration was given to teachers' planning and assessment information as well as to pupils' work. The subject leader's handbook was also scrutinised. The pupils' work shows pupils of different backgrounds and abilities make good progress and achieve well.

### **Commentary**

70. The curriculum is suitably balanced and covers appropriate areas. Time allocation is appropriate. Too few lessons were observed to make judgements on the quality of teaching and learning. The subject leader ensures that the subject is developing well over time. In common with other subject leaders there is not sufficient self-review and analysis about the effectiveness of the provision.



## HISTORY

It was only possible to observe a small number of lessons in history during the inspection, but consideration was given to pupils' work, teachers' planning and assessment information. The pupils' work shows that pupils of different abilities and ethnic backgrounds achieve well.

### Commentary

71. History is taught as part of an integrated humanities course which also includes geography. In Years 10 and 11 all pupils have the opportunity to take a combined entry level award in Humanities which covers history, geography and religious education. The teacher's good subject knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject create lively lessons in which pupils take an active part in a varied range of activities to engage their interest. Pupils have the opportunity to use and analyse sources, empathise, develop their own ideas and take part in role play to enhance their understanding of life in another era. In the small number of lessons seen teaching was very good. Planning was clear and learning objectives shared with pupils at the start of the session. Good review took place at the end of the lesson. There was a good focus on developing literacy skills alongside knowledge and understanding of history.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision in religious education is **very good** overall.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The high quality teaching.
- The good progress pupils make.
- The outstanding contribution religious education makes to pupils' spiritual and cultural development.
- The development of more appropriate assessment systems.

### Commentary

72. Pupils in Years 7 to 11 make good progress with their learning and achieve well because of the high quality teaching they receive. Their overall progress is less than it might be because of their weakness in literacy skills. The curriculum is an appropriate adaptation of the Redbridge Agreed Syllabus. It ensures that pupils explore and respond to religion and to human experience. Pupils study the six major world faiths and try to connect these religions with the lives of real people, using pupils in the school as examples whenever possible. They learn to understand that not all people have a faith and believe in God, but that every one has beliefs. They respect and value other pupils. From Year 7 to Year 9, pupils consider why St Francis loved the world and they discuss concepts such as suffering, peace and courage. In Years 10 and 11, pupils cover a wide range of topics. They consider what makes them special, what they value and what brings them happiness.

73. Teaching is very good overall and all of it is at least good. The co-ordinator has a high level of expertise in the subject and she is responsible for all the teaching of religious education in the school. Her passion for the subject shines through and there are inspirational moments in every lesson, each of which is creatively planned. She conveys strong values and pupils respect this approach; they are aware that religious education lessons are about life as well as learning about religions. They understand that religious education can help them with their difficulties and give them space to explore problems in their lives. The co-ordinator's teaching is built on very good working relationships which enable her to challenge pupils to think effectively. Lessons are well structured with a range of activities which take account of individual needs. The activities chosen interest the pupils and encourage them to engage in discussion and debate about the 'big questions', such as 'What does life mean?' and 'Why do bad things happen to good people?'. There is very good use of technical vocabulary and pupils use words like 'heart', 'soul' and 'spirit' comfortably and intuitively.

Lessons proceed with purpose and pupils work productively on gaining new knowledge and understanding. Support staff make a strong contribution to pupils' progress in lessons as their input is planned effectively. A weakness in provision that is recognised by the school is the need to develop more appropriate assessment systems.

74. The leadership and management of religious education are good and documentation is thorough and comprehensive. The co-ordinator is clear about the educational direction of the subject and the outstanding contribution it makes to pupils' spiritual and cultural development. She knows the major strengths of the subject and the few relative weaknesses in provision. Learning resources cover all areas of study and they are used effectively in lessons. There is a regular flow of new 'special objects' brought by pupils and parents. The teaching room itself is a major resource, which supports the teaching of the subject very well. The inspiring displays value pupils' work. These include the 'Wall of Wisdom', which celebrates the deep thoughts expressed by pupils in religious education lessons and 'Celebrating Ourselves', a photographic project where pupils took pictures of what was special to them.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

### **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

The subject covers design technology and also food technology. Only a small number of lessons could be observed. A range of other evidence including teachers' planning and pupils' work was analysed. This shows that overall pupils make good progress and achieve well. They enjoy this subject.

#### **Commentary**

75. The curriculum is suitably planned taking account of national and local guidance. There is a reasonable balance across the expected areas. Too few lessons were seen to enable a judgement to be made on the quality of teaching and learning. Subject leadership is effective and suitable areas have been highlighted as key developments, for example to extend the opportunities for pupils to gain national accreditation by including design technology along with food technology. Very good use is made of information and communication technology across all aspects of the subject.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

### **ART:**

It was only possible to observe a small number of lessons in art during the inspection. Consideration was given to pupils' work, teachers' planning and assessment information. The pupils' work shows that pupils of all abilities and ethnic backgrounds achieve well.

#### **Commentary**

76. Results at the end of Year 11 are strong with pupils achieving well at GCSE or entry level. Very good subject knowledge supports the teaching which is well planned to take account of the individual needs of pupils and to set high expectations for them. In the small number of lessons seen teaching was good. Planning was clear and pupils were able to engage in a wide range of interesting activities. There was a good reflection of different cultures in their work. Pupils are encouraged to operate independently in the art room which supports their personal development well. The use of ICT is being developed well to give pupils access to the work of a wide range of artists. Computers are used well, for example, pupils manipulating images to create a collage of an artist's work.

## **MUSIC**

No music lessons were seen during the inspection so it is not possible to make a judgement on achievement or the quality of teaching.

### **Commentary**

77. There is no specialist music teacher and therefore the programme lacks cohesion. A range of specialists visit the school to give pupils a suitable range of musical experiences including making music with a range of drums, steel pans and a sitar. Music is used in many subjects and there is good evidence on the school's Intranet that pupils are developing their skills satisfactorily. Singing is well developed and the school choir performs in school assemblies and at local events such as the Redbridge Festival.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

Only two lessons in Years 7 to 9 were observed and these were taken by a supply teacher. It is therefore not possible to form judgements on achievement and the quality of learning and teaching. Discussions with staff and pupils, along with a scrutiny of documentation, provides the following commentary.

### **Commentary**

78. Over the last few years the provision for physical education has been extended and improved through the development of partnerships with different providers. This has helped considerably to compensate for the poor PE accommodation on site. These providers include, amongst others, the local university, further education college, swimming baths and tennis club. Activities such as golf, tennis, orienteering, canoeing and sailing are now fully integrated within the PE programme. In particular, the development of the school's swimming programme has been very successful leading to pupils achieving highly in this discipline. The overall sports programme has also been improved and now includes rugby, hockey, volleyball and badminton. Pupils have progressed well through these programmes and have had considerable success in representing the Borough of Redbridge in the London Youth Games in the last two years.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

Learning opportunities in personal, social and health education, citizenship and careers education are very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A very well-developed programme which is very well organised by the Key Stage 3 and 4 co-ordinators and the curriculum deputy.
- The good quality of teaching which encourages pupils to be open and honest with one another.
- Pupils study a range of age-appropriate topics as they move through the school.
- Pupils follow a good careers programme that prepares them well for the next stages of their learning.
- Strong links with community facilities support learning.

### **Commentary**

79. Overall, pupils achieve very well and make very good progress in relation to their starting points. The school places great emphasis on pupils' personal development and this is evident in all the work that it does. Lessons in personal, social, health education and citizenship build on this well to promote pupils' personal development in a formal and planned way. This results in pupils

becoming more confident and willing to participate, whether it be in the school council or in discussions in lessons on, for example, the United Nations Articles for Human Rights.

80. The quality of teaching seen was often good and frequently very good. Staff interacted very well with pupils encouraging them to 'speak their minds' but in a respectful way. Lesson content is meaningful to the pupils: anger management; road safety; family relationships- all are delivered in a way which pupils can understand. For example, in a lesson which focused on the New Year, new term, new start theme the slogan of '**M**ake **A** Difference – go **MAD** everyday' caught the pupils' imagination, as did images of the Holocaust, obtained through the school's Intranet, when discussing the development of Ten World Laws. This led to high quality discussions and some very personal ideas for improvement. The work of the Social Use of Language Programme contributes substantially to this curriculum area and a very good session was observed on getting pupils to use appropriate eye-contact in different situations.

81. The leadership and management of this curriculum area are very good. A team of staff with a passion for this area of work has produced a comprehensive programme that addresses topics such as personal care, safety, healthy living, bullying, and sex and relationships, as well as encompassing the National Curriculum requirements for citizenship, in a structured and progressive way. A good quality careers programme also contributes significantly to preparing pupils for the next stage of their life. Last year all pupils in Year 11 were either successfully placed on college courses or have been included in the 16 Plus provision at the school. Consequently, pupils in all years develop knowledge and understanding of these aspects through activities that are appropriate to their age and interests. This is equipping them very well with the skills required to become active members of society.

## SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

Provision in Post-16 is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- All students achieve well, and the achievement for some students, particularly those of lower ability, is often very good.
- Overall, the quality of teaching is good.
- The curriculum, and its accreditation, is appropriately matched to the needs of the students.
- The personal, social and health education programme is effective in preparing students for life after school.
- The provision is well managed on a day-to-day basis.
- The characteristics of the cohort for whom provision is made are not sufficiently clearly defined to provide effective entry criteria for students into Year 12.
- Students' key skills are not accredited separately from their main programme.
- The formal monitoring of students' progress is not sufficiently rigorous.

### Commentary

82. The Post-16 provision was established in September 2000 to provide an alternative to the local college-based provision. The wide range of students' needs and abilities is accommodated through the use of the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) qualifications. Students are set into two groups; for the larger, higher-attaining group the Youth Award at Bronze level is used while for lower-attaining students the Transition Challenge or Towards Independence qualifications are used. All students leave the school with the qualification which is best matched to their needs. However, students' Key Skills are not formally accredited and the school has recognised this as a weakness and is working towards establishing such accreditation for the present cohort. The programmes which are provided enable students to continue to make the good and for some students, the very good, progress they made in Years 7 to 11. This represents good and very good achievement for these students. The school enjoys great success in developing the personal and social skills of all its students, but particularly the lower-attaining, and prepares them well for life after school.

83. Overall, the quality of teaching in the lessons observed was good. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen and some teaching, particularly in information and communication technology and French, was very good or outstanding. Teachers have good subject knowledge and they have very good appreciation of the needs of the students. A wide range of teaching styles and strategies are used to ensure that all students make at least good progress in developing their skills. Teachers make particularly good use of information and communication technology to provide students with access to the curriculum and to support their learning with very good use being made of it by both teachers and students in presenting their portfolios. Students are very proud of their work and take great care in its production. All teachers match the pace of learning well to the needs of the students and set high expectations of them. Students respond well to this and concentrate carefully for long periods of time. For example, in a literacy lesson, even when students were allowed free-reading time as a reward, most elected to continue with their reading scheme book.

84. All students show good improvement in their self-esteem and confidence and make positive contributions to the life of the school and in helping the younger pupils. A good example of this is the waste paper collection on Tuesday and Thursday lunchtimes which is organised and run by the students and the proceeds from which make a significant contribution to defraying the costs of the daily breakfast club. Many of the higher-attaining Post-16 students act as mentors for younger pupils when they are working with computers.

85. The Post-16 programme is well managed on a day-to-day basis. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of the needs of the students and in a relatively short time has developed an

appropriate set of qualifications to meet these needs. However, to date, all students who have entered Post-16 have spent at least some time in the main school but, for 2004 entry, applications have been received from pupils at other schools and with those intending to stay on from Little Heath, the provision is oversubscribed. The school has recognised the need to clearly define the needs of the students for whom it can make provision and develop appropriate entry criteria against which the needs of those applying for entry can be judged. The school Intranet is used very well by both staff and students to record progress and students receive good quality verbal feedback on a regular basis about what they need to do to improve their work. However, there is no formal system of review and evaluation at an individual level through which this information is recorded.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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