

# INSPECTION REPORT

## GRAYS CONVENT HIGH SCHOOL

Grays

LEA area: Thurrock

Unique reference number: 115239

Headteacher: Mr P Kyndt

Lead inspector: Dr David Benstock

Dates of inspection: 8<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> December 2003

Inspection number: 261017

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

© Crown copyright 2004

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	11-16
Gender of pupils:	Female
Number on roll:	615
School address:	College Avenue Grays Essex
Postcode:	RM17 5UX
Telephone number:	01375 376173
Fax number:	01375 394724
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Sister Margaret O'Reilly
Date of previous inspection:	16 <sup>th</sup> November 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Grays Convent School is an 11 - 16 girls' comprehensive school, and is smaller than average. It is voluntary aided by the Roman Catholic Church. It is situated in the town of Grays and the school serves mainly the Roman Catholic families over a wide area. A small number of non-Catholics are admitted. The socio-economic background reflects a mixed range of family circumstances. A significant number have little experience of higher education and experience social deprivation. Many have selected the school for its positive ethos and academic success. Very few pupils leave or join the school at other than the usual time. The school is heavily oversubscribed. The majority of pupils have white British heritage. The number of pupils who speak English as an additional language is a little higher than average, though none are at an early stage. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is average, and the percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is below the national average. The percentage of pupils with statements, mainly for pupils with physical hearing impairment, dyslexia or moderate learning difficulty, is also below national average. Standards on entry to the school are average. The school has Beacon status, awards for achievement, quality in careers education, and the Sportsmark Award from 'Sport England'.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20243	David Benstock	Lead inspector	
19727	Eric Langford	Lay inspector	
31135	Rachel Hobson	Team inspector	English
3643	Derek Jones	Team inspector	Mathematics
22780	David Custance	Team inspector	Science
2183	Peter Thompson	Team inspector	Design and technology Information and communication technology (ICT)
4223	Garth Collard	Team inspector	Geography
19152	Richard Merryfield	Team inspector	History
31685	Val Girling	Team inspector	Art and design
23308	John Morrell	Team inspector	Music
22042	John Challands	Team inspector	Physical education
24887	Yvonne Salmons	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages English as an additional language
2494	Michael Newton	Team inspector	Citizenship Special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

Serco QAA  
Herringston Barn  
Herringston  
Dorchester  
Dorset  
DT2 9PU

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website ([www.Ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.Ofsted.gov.uk)).

## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>8</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>12</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>35</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a very good school with excellent features.** It gives good value for money. Standards are above average and achievement of pupils is very good. GCSE results reflect value added that is very high in comparison with similar schools. Attitudes and behaviour are excellent. Teaching and learning are very good. There are very clear procedures for the care and welfare for pupils. The school is well managed; leadership and governance are very good.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The excellent attitudes, behaviour and personal development of pupils make a significant contribution to their very good achievement.
- Standards achieved in Year 11 in mathematics and English are well above the national average, and overall progress from Year 9 to Year 11 is very high compared with similar schools.
- Leadership and governance of the school are very good overall and the headteacher provides inspiring leadership.
- Teaching is consistently very good and leads to very good learning.
- The provision for the teaching of modern languages is excellent.
- There is a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities.
- Parents are very supportive and there is a strong sense of community, but some parents feel they do not receive sufficient information about progress of their children.
- There is a lack of consistency and clarity in the use of assessment in Years 7 - 9.
- Standards and teaching quality in physical education are lower than in other subjects.
- Curriculum organisation does not provide equally well enough for the needs of all pupils.

Since the last inspection the overall effectiveness of the school has remained very good. Standards overall have risen in line with national trends and the quality of teaching and learning firmly established. The high quality of leadership continues to make a significant impact on pupils' achievement. Curriculum issues have been addressed though others have arisen. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching have become more established and rigorous, but there remains further progress to be made. Accommodation in science and technology has been refurbished. Overall there has been good improvement.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

**Overall, achievement is very good.** Standards are well above average. Pupils with special educational needs or who have English as an additional language also achieve very well. In the National Tests for Year 9 pupils in 2003, the performance in English, mathematics and science was above the national average. Standards in Year 9 overall are well above average by comparison with similar schools, where the intake is of similar standard.

Standards in GCSE examinations overall are well above average compared with all schools and very high compared with similar schools. Performance was highest in 2003 in English, ICT (Business and Communications Systems), history, art and design, Spanish and French. It was lowest in drama and physical education. Results are maintained at this high level year on year, rising in line with the national trend. The overall standards of work seen in school in Year 11 were very high in modern languages, well above average in English, mathematics, ICT, art and design, history, and citizenship. They are above average in science, music, design and technology, and average in geography and physical education.

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

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

Pupils' attitudes to learning and school life are excellent. **Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, overall, is very good.** Development of moral attitudes and responsibility towards others is excellent. It contributes greatly to pupils' personal development and results in excellent personal qualities, behaviour and relationships. Attendance is very good and pupils make every effort to be punctual to lessons in a school with tortuous routes around the buildings. They take their work very seriously.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION

**The overall quality of education is very good. Teaching and learning are very good.** Learning is very good as a result of the very good teaching and excellent attitudes of pupils. Assessment is used well overall, but there are inconsistencies in giving feedback to pupils on their progress. The curriculum is satisfactory in its breadth and balance, but further consideration by the school of curriculum organisation, time allocation and vocational options is needed. Time allocations are uneven in humanities subjects, whilst single lessons are sometimes too short, vocational courses in Year 10 and 11 are undeveloped, and overall teaching time is below that recommended. Careers education is very good. The school has very good provision for the care of pupils. It enjoys very good support from parents and there are very good links with the community, both of which have a marked effect on achievement.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**The overall leadership and management of the school are very good.** The headteacher is an excellent, inspiring leader, with clarity of vision and a strong focus on raising achievement. The acting deputy headteacher gives excellent support and shares the management tasks well with other senior staff. Other key staff, including heads of department, provide very good leadership and build competent and hardworking teams. Overall, management is good; very good systems for school organisation and staff development are in place but there is inconsistency in assessment, target setting and some aspects of the monitoring of teaching. Governance of the school is very good, being supportive, challenging and forward thinking. Financial management is excellent. The school meets all statutory requirements.

## PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very pleased and supportive of the school. They feel the teaching and level of care is good, but would like more information about their child's progress and other aspects. Pupils are very happy at the school. They appreciate that teachers expect them to work hard.

## IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Make better use of assessment, grades and targets to inform pupils of their progress
- Ensure the curriculum meets the needs of all pupils
- Raise standards of achievement in physical education.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Overall standards are above average in Year 9 and well above average in Year 11. Achievement is very good, since standards overall rise from being average at entry to well above by Year 11.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Well above average standards at GCSE in mathematics and English, consistently maintained over recent years, represent very good achievement for the majority of pupils.
- Excellent achievement as a result of very good teaching and excellent attitudes in modern languages.
- The percentage of pupils gaining five or more grades A\* - C grades at GCSE is very high compared with similar schools.
- Achievement in physical education is lower than that found in other subjects.

#### Commentary

1. In the National Curriculum tests for Year 9, in 2003, the overall performance of the pupils, as measured by their average point score, was above the national average. The percentage of pupils gaining target level 5, or higher, was well above national average. Pupils enter the school with broadly average results from national tests in Year 6 in their primary schools, and therefore achievement up to Year 9 is good. The “value added score”, which is a measure of progress, was well above the national average in 2003. In the previous three years the overall standards in Year 9 had been higher, consistently well above average.
2. Performance in 2003 was well above average compared with schools having a similar intake, in terms of their Year 6 National Curriculum test scores. Results have been consistently maintained year-on-year up to 2002 and have risen in line with the national trend.
3. In the 2003 tests, average point scores in English, mathematics and science were all above average. The school’s analysis of the performance of ethnic minority groups and those with special educational needs shows that these groups attain at least as well as their peers.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results (median)
English	35.0 (36.1)	33.7 (33.3)
mathematics	37.5 (36.4)	36.0 (34.7)
science	34.8 (35.2)	34.3 (33.3)

*There were 124 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

4. Results in the GCSE examinations in 2003 were well above the national average, both in the percentage of pupils gaining five or more A\* - C grades and the average point score gained per pupil. The “value added score” for this year group was very high and within the top five per cent of schools in the country for achievement of this order. The results were very much the same high standard in 2002 and have been consistently so for the past five years since the last inspection.



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

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	75.0 (74.0)	50 (49.9)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	99.2 (99.2)	90 (90.9)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	99.2 (99.5)	97 (97.0)
Average point score per pupil	51.8 (51.4)	39.9 (39.8)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	43.5 (43.3)	34.3 (n/a)

*There were 124 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

5. The percentages of pupils gaining A\*-C grades in GCSE English and mathematics were well above average in 2003, as in previous years, and in science the percentage was lower, but still above average. Standards were high in art and design, design and technology and modern languages. Results in 2003 were below average in drama and physical education.
6. In comparison with similar schools, that is, ones where the standards in Year 9 are broadly similar to those at Grays Convent, the percentage of pupils gaining five or more grades A\* - C, and the average point score per pupil, were both very high.
7. Standards seen in lessons and in the written work of pupils in English are well above average in Year 9 and Year 11 with pupils making particularly good progress with English literature. In mathematics, standards seen are above average in Year 9, and well above average in Year 11, where pupils are adept at applying their knowledge to problem solving. The standards seen in science are above average in Year 9, and in Year 11. Achievement in English, mathematics and science overall is very good. Standards generally in ICT are above average and they are well above average in the business and communication systems GCSE course, which is effectively ICT in a business environment.
8. Standards seen are very high in Year 11 in modern languages and achievement is excellent. Achievement is also excellent In Years 7 to 9 in Spanish, and very good in French. Standards achieved by Year 11 are well above average in art and design, history and citizenship. They are above average in design and technology and music, and average in geography. Standards seen in physical education in Year 9 are broadly average and achievement is satisfactory. In Year 11 they are broadly average, overall. Pupils taking GCSE physical education in 2003 produced results that were well below average and achievement was unsatisfactory. However, under the leadership of a new head of department, the current pupils are achieving well and standards are improved.
9. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well and in line with the achievement of other pupils. This is as a result of the high quality support they receive in the school. This is particularly evident in English, where pupils with weak literacy skills are helped to achieve very well. The general ethos of high expectations contributes significantly to the very good achievement of gifted and talented pupils. Achievement, however, is not as good as might be expected in design and technology and physical education, where there is little special provision for these pupils.
10. A slightly higher proportion of pupils than in most schools speak English as an additional language (EAL). All are at the advanced stages of learning English. The main languages other than English spoken by pupils are Punjabi, Cantonese and Italian. Pupils with English as an additional language achieve at least as well as all other pupils and make very good progress. Examination results show that pupils with EAL perform no differently from other pupils of the same ability, since none are at an early stage of language acquisition. Pupils from minority

ethnic groups are clearly identified by the school and their achievement well monitored. They achieve as well as other pupils within the school.

11. Overall, pupils are achieving very well in the school and this is clearly attributed to the consistently very good teaching in most areas and the excellent attitudes of pupils to their work.

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

Pupils' attitudes to learning and to school life are excellent. Relationships within the school are excellent and behaviour is excellent. Pupils are provided with very good opportunities for their personal development. Pupils' attendance is very good and punctuality is excellent. These superb aspects of the school have been maintained and developed since the last inspection and make a strong contribution to the pupils' very good learning and personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The high quality relationships between pupils, and between pupils and staff, underpin the positive ethos of care and purpose that pervades throughout the school.
- Pupils' excellent behaviour and attitudes to learning contribute greatly to the very good standards being achieved across the school.
- The very good range of responsibilities on offer to the pupils enhances the quality of their personal development opportunities.
- Very good attendance by pupils enables the school to maximise their learning opportunities.

### **Commentary**

12. Pupils enjoy coming to school and the great majority display excellent levels of commitment to their continued learning. They work hard, collaborate very well with each other and respond with enthusiasm to the very good teaching they receive. They think teachers are fair, willing to listen to their ideas and are very approachable. All pupils display a keenness to learn and a strong desire to gain knowledge. The well-developed and mature attitudes displayed by most of the older pupils provide an extra edge to the proactive way they pursue their individual learning goals. Pupils of all ages are proud of their school and those talked with, expressed many positive views.
13. The school's high expectations are evident through the excellent behaviour to be seen in and around the school. A few parents raised concerns about bullying. However, following checks of records and many observations and discussions with pupils and staff, it was concluded that bullying was not an issue in the school. The school deals swiftly with any incidents of inappropriate behaviour, to the satisfaction of all concerned. Pupils display high levels of respect and are courteous and polite. The excellent relationships that exist between pupils and between pupils and staff contribute in a significant way to the ethos of care, purpose and a desire to learn that pervades the school.
14. Pupils with special educational needs, as with other pupils, have a very positive attitude and strong work ethic. Their self-esteem and self-confidence are raised significantly as a result of the quality support received. Pupils have a strong commitment to improvement and take full advantage of the opportunities offered to them, such as the lunchtime support club. Pupils with English as an additional language have excellent attitudes to learning and are well integrated into the school community.
15. Staff within the school are proactive in creating a very good range of personal development opportunities for the pupils. The school council provides pupils with invaluable experience of the benefits of living in a democracy and enables them to show enterprise, influence school life and enhance their learning environment. The pupils' experience of working with a wide range of visiting professionals, through the very good personal, social and health education programme, adds great value to the development of their citizenship skills. Of particular benefit to many

pupils is the organising of prefect responsibilities, with alternating Year 11 pupils normally on duty throughout break times, covered during their examination periods by Year 10 pupils, with Year 9 pupils acting as prefects when Year 10 are on out-of-school visits. Within their form groups, pupils are actively encouraged to take on responsibilities ranging from preparing and clearing away learning resources, planning and organising assemblies to devising fund-raising events for a variety of worthwhile charitable causes. The school is rightly proud of the way so many pupils willingly volunteer, accept and undertake these responsibilities with vigour and obvious pride.

**Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)**

Authorised absence	
School data:	6.3
National data:	7.8

Unauthorised absence	
School data:	0.2
National data:	1.0

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

16. The high levels of attendance sustained across all year groups reflects well the excellent commitment the pupils have to their learning. Punctuality in school is excellent and the prompt start to lessons enables teachers to maximise the pupils' learning opportunities. Pupils enjoy coming to school and exclusions are rare.

**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	548	3	0
White – any other White background	7	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	4	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	14	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	9	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	5	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	4	0	0
Black or Black British – African	6	1	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	9	0	0
Chinese	4	0	0
Any other ethnic group	2	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	2	0	0

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

17. The Christian ethos and mission of the school help to ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
18. There is an excellent level of respect for the views of others, including those from a non-Catholic background. The small minority of pupils from other cultures are very well integrated

and respected in the school. The school meets statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship. Pupils have opportunities for reflection through many of the personal challenges presented to them in, for example, the high level of charity work. In some subjects, such as English and art, pupils' spiritual development is enhanced by opportunities to consider the views and feelings of others.

19. Moral principles based on the Christian ethic are evident in all aspects of school life and pupils have an excellent appreciation of these values. Many subjects enhance pupils' moral development by providing the opportunity for pupils to consider the application of these principles by raising wider moral issues such as environmental issues, poverty and refugee status. In particular English, citizenship, personal, social and health education, history, and geography were seen to contribute in this way.
20. The provision for pupils' social development is excellent. There are excellent opportunities for pupils to develop their social skills, both through discussion and planning in lessons, and through extra-curricular activities, visits and residential trips. Pupils often discuss and plan in pairs and small groups. Valuable opportunities to take responsibility are offered to pupils, including acting as prefects, librarians, membership of the school council and participating in community activities. All Year 10 pupils do three weeks of work experience and over a third of them are awarded the Trident Gold Certificate for assisting in local schools and undertaking a personal challenge. Pupils are involved in numerous fund-raising events throughout the year, and Year 8 have raised money to provide a supplementary food diet for schoolchildren at a link school in Tanzania. This not only results in substantial sums of money being raised for charitable causes but also increases pupils' awareness of the needs of others.
21. The provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. The school creates a strong climate of respect for all people. Through the citizenship and religious education curriculum pupils are taught to appreciate their own cultural traditions and the richness and diversity of other cultures. Foreign exchanges to Germany, France and Spain, day trips to the battlefields of France and Belgium and numerous visits to art galleries, museums and theatres all enhance cultural development. The lack of such visits was criticised in the last inspection. Consideration for other cultures is found in art, music, drama, the humanities and English, but needs to be further developed in other subjects. A great emphasis is placed on multi-cultural education and the school provides opportunities for the celebration of religious festivals. Cultural diversity is used to promote tolerance. The art curriculum has been broadened to include visits to the Tate and the Goodwood sculptures, and combined visits to Paris and Barcelona have been arranged in co-operation with the modern foreign language department. Pupils develop a very good understanding of the range of cultures in modern British society.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

Overall the quality of education is very good. Teaching and learning are very good. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum. Provision for the care of pupils is very good. Links with parents and the community are very good.

### **Teaching and Learning**

The quality of teaching and learning is very good throughout the school. Assessment is well used to support pupils' learning, but there is inconsistency between departments in the use of assessment data to monitor and set targets for pupils' performance.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' very good subject knowledge and expertise result in well planned and stimulating lessons.
- Pupils are very highly self-motivated and apply themselves to their studies exceptionally well.
- High expectations and challenge lead to accelerated and successful learning.
- Whilst satisfactory, teaching, learning and achievement in Years 7 to 9 in design and technology and physical education are weaker than in other subjects.
- Excellent teaching in Spanish leads pupils to a clear understanding of the Hispanic culture.
- The range of teaching methods in some subjects in Years 7 to 9 is insufficiently broad to fully develop pupils' independence in their learning.

## Commentary

22. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and, together with pupils' excellent attitudes, makes a significant contribution to their very good achievement. Teaching and learning are very good in the majority of subjects. In subjects such as English, modern languages, art and design, and citizenship, pupils learn very well because teachers have high expectations and challenge them very effectively. A brisk pace, together with frequent paired and group work, mean that pupils are actively involved in lessons and their attention is sustained well. In Spanish the quality of teaching is excellent and in both modern languages, pupils make excellent progress in listening and speaking, owing to teachers' consistent use of the foreign language in which most are fluent or native speakers.

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 108 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
6 (6%)	42 (39%)	39 (36%)	20 (19%)	1 (1%)	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.*

23. Pupils learn very well in the majority of subjects including ICT, music, history and art and design. They respond to each other, their teachers and the demands facing them in an extremely positive and mature manner so that many lessons are characterised by excellent attitudes and very good learning.
24. Teachers generally adapt their teaching well to meet the needs of pupils with special needs. This is particularly evident in lower attaining sets in English, mathematics and science. Where a pupil has a learning support assistant (LSA) there is good liaison between the teacher and the LSA, ensuring that the pupil and others pupils in need of help in the group learn well. In Years 7 to 9, pupils with weak literacy skills, and sometimes numeracy skills, are withdrawn from library lessons in small groups for extra support. The teaching by LSAs on these occasions is good and sometimes very good and pupils make good progress.
25. In all years teaching and learning are very good in English, art and design, ICT, music, history, and citizenship, and also geography in Years 10 and 11. They are good in science and mathematics, and in geography in Years 7 to 9. They are very good overall in modern languages and excellent in Spanish. Teaching and learning in design and technology are satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. In physical education teaching and learning overall are satisfactory. Teachers' subject expertise is good, resulting in clear, accurate explanations and helpful summaries, from which pupils learn well. In some lessons there was too much reliance on textbook activities when more variety could have stimulated a greater response from pupils. In Years 7 to 9 in subjects such as geography and physical education, too many single lessons restrict the development of the lesson, and in others such as history the shortage of time restricts the coverage of the curriculum.

26. In design and technology in Years 7 to 9 teachers' expectations are not as demanding as they could be and as a consequence of this, pupils' design and making skills are not always sufficiently developed in some aspects of the subject, and higher-attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged.
27. The thoroughness and use of assessment overall are good and work is regularly marked. In geography very good systems of assessment and close monitoring of coursework enable pupils to achieve very well at GCSE. In most others pupils do not consistently receive sufficient information about the levels at which they are working, or the scope for improvement. Much useful assessment data is produced centrally in the school but heads of department require further training to improve the consistency of its use. The headteacher's personal involvement in identifying and monitoring potential under-achievement is very effective.
28. There is excellent practice in assessment in art and design. Pupils in all years receive very clear guidance about National Curriculum levels and GCSE assessment criteria. Very detailed marking and diagnostic comment offers pupils clear guidance about the scope for improvement; this is supplemented by display of exemplar work, which clearly identifies why those marks have been awarded.

### Example of Outstanding Practice

**A Year 11 Spanish lesson for able pupils encompassed highly skilled planning, questioning and use of resources to maximise achievement.**

The objectives were to develop pupils' vocabulary and their use of the past tense while studying Picasso's painting *Guernica*. The lesson was delivered entirely in Spanish, and planned in clear stages. Firstly, as a whole class, pupils read and understood an introductory text about the Spanish Civil War, well supported by the teacher's explanation of challenging language such as *guerra civil*, *bombardeo*, *fuerzas revolucionarias*. Her skilful questioning and use of praise resulted in pupils confidently re-using the language they had heard. Excellent use of overhead transparencies and other illustrations successfully highlighted details of the painting, leading pupils to share Picasso's horror at the human suffering caused by war. Pupils then worked well together in pairs, discussing and writing their reactions in Spanish, during which the teacher circulated, carefully monitoring language accuracy. Finally, the class attentively listened to each other's contributions. The teacher matched this lesson exactly to the capabilities and sensitivity of the group, and very good planning ensured that lesson objectives were fully met. Additionally, pupils progressed in all the language skills, and significantly extended both their knowledge of Spanish art and history, and their awareness of wider moral and cultural issues.

### The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory, but out of school activities are very good. Accommodation and resources are good overall.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Time allocation for history and geography in Years 7 to 9 is lower than average and impacts upon standards and achievement.
- The curriculum is enhanced by the very good programme for personal, social and health education, which encompasses careers and citizenship.
- Accommodation is greatly improved but is still inadequate in some areas.
- Very good opportunities are provided for extra-curricular activities.
- Vocational options in Years 10 and 11 are limited.

### Commentary

29. The school provides a reasonably broad curriculum and all subjects are taught in Years 7 to 9. A second language is appropriately available to higher ability pupils from Year 9 onwards. The time allocation for history and geography is below that normally provided and this has had the effect of depressing achievement in these subjects. The overall teaching time is 24 hours and is less than the recommended amount of 25 hours.
30. Personal, social and health education is very well planned. The citizenship aspects are well developed. Careers education is provided in Years 9 to 11 and all pupils have well-planned work experience for three weeks in Year 10. The school has received awards for the quality of its careers provision.
31. A satisfactory range of options is available in Years 10 and 11. A very good course on the use of ICT in business and communication is popular and GCSE physical education is offered. Apart from child development, there are no real options for vocational courses. Planning for 14-19 curriculum programmes is in hand but limited progress has been made with the provision of opportunities.
32. The school provides an impressive range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities which augment the curriculum and allow pupils to enhance their learning and develop personal and social qualities. There is very good academic support for learning through subject clubs and lunchtime booster classes. Pupils with special needs receive very good support through lunchtime mentoring sessions with learning assistants who liaise effectively with subject teachers. There is a strong school community ethos to which sporting and artistic activities make a significant contribution. The annual play and Christmas concert provide such an occasion for pupils from all year groups to be involved and to contribute according to their talents. There is good involvement in after-school sport and the school's teams perform well in regional competition. Parents are very supportive. They attend concerts and plays and provide transport after school, thus largely removing the bussing problems referred to in the last report.
33. Very good enrichment is provided by trips, many of which embrace cross-curricular aspects, such as those to France and Spain. Gifted and talented pupils are well provided for. In science, they are able to attend lectures at the Royal Institution, and senior pupils make an excellent contribution to project work carried out with other schools, such as in the development of a web site. There is a well-supported reading club for gifted and talented pupils. The school has links with other schools, partly as a result of the Excellence in Cities initiative, and some opportunities such as a university taster course have arisen as a result.
34. The school's policy is to ensure that pupils with special educational needs have full access to the whole curriculum. As a result there is no withdrawal from lessons except for a few small groups who are provided with extra literacy support during their English library period. Extra staffing enables lower ability sets to remain very small in the core subjects and LSAs are deployed to provide maximum support for pupils with special needs. Although gifted and talented pupils are identified for the staff, pupils and parents are not informed. Most provision is through the work in higher sets but a range of extra-curricular activities in subjects such as English, science, art and music are provided for these pupils.
35. Delivery of the curriculum is very well supported by an appropriate number of well-qualified specialist teaching staff in all departments. In most cases where teachers are teaching outside their specialism, they are doing this very successfully. Support staff play a very effective part in the success of the school. Learning support assistants support pupils with special educational needs very well. In science, technician support is very good but in ICT there is no network manager and the head of department has to provide technical support. In technology insufficient support has resulted in teaching staff having to prepare materials and attend to important safety matters.
36. Resources are good in most subjects but there are some areas where limited resources are having an adverse effect on standards, including drama whose resources are more suited to

performances rather than learning, and music where the shortage of ICT prevents regular use throughout Years 7 to 9. . The school library provides a good learning resource with a wide range of suitable material including an appropriate section of books for weak readers. All books are available for borrowing and pupils make good use of this valuable source of learning.

37. Accommodation is satisfactory. Good improvements have been made since the last inspection report. As part of a ten-year improvement programme the science department has been completely refurbished, and the technology area and ICT have been considerably improved. This has contributed to a rise in standards. However, there are still some inadequacies in the accommodation. The area dedicated to graphics and resistant materials is small with insufficient room for storage and necessary resources. Drama has no specialist base with most lessons being taught in the hall or moved to other non-specialist classrooms when the hall is unavailable. Spanish is taught in two small, poorly heated temporary classrooms.

### **Care, guidance and support**

The school ensures pupils' care, welfare and health and safety very well. It provides them with very good pastoral support and guidance and involves them very well in aspects of the school's work and development. This represents an area of improvement since the last inspection.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- High quality care and welfare-related procedures ensure that the best interests of pupils are maintained at all times.
- Pupils feel valued and are fully involved in the running of the school.
- High quality advice and guidance ensure that pupils' pastoral needs are fully met and they are well prepared for coping with life after school.
- Good health and safety procedures ensure the pupils enjoy a safe learning environment.
- Good levels of guidance are provided in support of pupils' decision-making on further study and career options.

### **Commentary**

38. Very good child protection and care-related procedures are in place, with staff aware of, and familiar with, the need for vigilance in monitoring the well-being and welfare of the pupils in their care. Risk assessment techniques are well embedded into school routines and good health and safety procedures embrace the whole spectrum of pupils' time in the school. During the inspection pupils and adults in the school demonstrated good health and safety practice. The school has established a medical room for use by pupils not feeling well and this is an improvement since the last inspection.
39. Teachers know their pupils very well and provide them with a high level of pastoral support. They are kindly and sensitive to their needs. Very good and effective induction procedures ensure new pupils and parents are quickly introduced to the routines of school life. There are no formal curricular planning links between the school and its main feeder schools. The school places a great emphasis on ensuring that teachers keep informative records of pupils' standards and there is a very good practice for identifying and monitoring pupils' personal development and progress against targets through the pastoral development programme. Pupils are well informed of their personal targets, which are discussed with teachers and form tutors and communicated to parents.
40. Consultation with pupils across all year groups is very good. Pupils are fully involved in influencing the running of the school through the well-developed school council structure. Their suggestions have been well received by the school and had a positive impact on improving their learning environment.



41. Pupils with special educational needs are very well cared for and supported. Apart from the very good support provided for all pupils through the pastoral system, each pupil on School Action Plus or with a statement has a designated LSA who monitors their progress and is involved with the review of both their individual education plan and statement. Their needs are well documented so that each of their teachers is aware of their targets and given advice on strategies to help them achieve.
42. Within the overall personal, social and health education programme, there is a well-planned programme of careers education to assist pupils' subject and career choices. The Connexions careers service is closely involved with the school in helping pupils to make informed choices about their options and to prepare them for transfer to work or to further education. The very good level of career guidance is readily available in the school library. The school makes very good use of a well-planned work experience programme to provide pupils with an introduction and exposure to the working environment of local employers.

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

Parents' contribution to pupils' learning at school and at home is very good and has been maintained since the last inspection. The level of information on progress given to parents is good. However, a minority of parents does not feel sufficiently informed about how their children are progressing. An area of improvement since the last inspection is the very good partnership arrangements developed with the community, local businesses and with other educational establishments. Partnerships with other schools are very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The very good links with other schools and colleges enhance pupils' personal development and expose them to the ways of the wider world.
- Very good business and community partnership arrangements enrich pupils' access to high quality learning experiences.
- Most parents are very satisfied with the school, are involved in their children's learning and have confidence in the headteacher and staff.
- There is no formal practice for the canvassing of parents' views on the running of the school.
- A minority of parents do not feel well informed on their child's progress.

### **Commentary**

43. The school's very good relationship with parents is amply demonstrated by the many positive views expressed in the parents' questionnaire and at the parents' meeting prior to the inspection. Parents consider staff very approachable and responsive and are pleased with the school's high expectations and the high standards their children are achieving. Scrutiny of pupils' records show that there are very good arrangements for regular contact with parents. Many parents value highly the pupil diary system and teachers praise its use for the exchange of comments between themselves and parents on pupils' progress.
44. Parents are provided with a good level of information about the school and their child's progress and the close partnership between most parents and teachers ensures concerns and queries can be quickly addressed. Overall the quality of annual progress reports to parents is good and provides a good insight into how their child is doing at school. However there are inconsistencies between teachers in providing detail on what pupils know and can do and specific targets for improvement. A number of parents would like to know how well their children are achieving against National Curriculum expectations, a view that the inspection team supports and which will better inform parents on the progress being made by their children.
45. The school consulted parents well on some issues, although some parents indicated that they would like more regular information. For example, views were sought on the healthy school

programme and the draft sex and relations policy. While parent governors were actively involved in the decision for the change in school uniform, parents at large were not. The school has yet to implement any regular formal process for surveying parents' views on all aspects of school life. Teachers and parents do work together as partners in the development of strategies to help pupils improve their approach to learning in the home and school environment.

46. Partly as a consequence of its Beacon school status, the very good partnership with other schools and educational establishments is judged a strength of the school. This ranges from well-organised induction links for pupils joining the school from primary education, through high quality pupil and teacher exchange opportunities with schools in England and Germany, to a fast developing international relationship with a peer school in Tanzania. Pupils from all year groups benefit greatly from their interactive links with pupils from these other schools, and the many sporting activities and joint learning events organised for them add significant value to their overall learning experiences. The pupils' involvement in furthering the development of ICT beyond the school, Year 10 pupils giving training in basic ICT skills to learning support assistants from other schools, Year 11 pupils undertaking a joint study skills day with peer pupils – all of these contribute greatly to the pupils' own understanding and knowledge in this important area of learning.
47. The school enjoys the confidence of the community that it serves. The school's clear commitment to inclusion and the care of young people within its wider community is well demonstrated through its very good community links. These include close partnership working with local organisations, for example Year 11 pupils being invited to attend Thurrock Council debating sessions and the monthly visit of the local advice centre "Open Door" bus for informal drop-ins by pupils of any age.
48. Worthy of note are the very good business links the school has developed and the positive benefits these bring to the pupils' learning about the wider working world. They also provide the school with curriculum enrichment opportunities. These include skilled electronics staff to talk with pupils on specialist subjects such as robotics technology and site visits for pupils to see and experience modern production methods and manufacturing processes.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management of the school are very good. The leadership of the headteacher is excellent and that of other key staff, including heads of department, is very good. Management overall is good. Governance of the school is very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Excellent leadership of the headteacher has maintained high standards and a focus on achievement
- Financial management is excellent.
- Governors provide an excellent mix of support and challenge.
- There is an exceptional commitment to the inclusion of all pupils.

### **Commentary**

49. The leadership of the school has been extremely effective in maintaining and raising achievement and standards. The headteacher has an excellent clarity in his vision for the future development of the school. He is focussed on achievement and will investigate any avenue to produce an improvement.
50. The senior staff are excellent role models for teachers and pupils. The ethos of the school is promoted strongly by them. There is a strong commitment to ensuring that pupils' needs are individually served. For example, the achievement of ethnic minority groups has been carefully

monitored. Very good use is made of assessment and performance data to evaluate the school against national standards. The school works closely with the local education authority adviser.

51. Staff with management responsibilities, including heads of department, are very committed to improvement and raising achievement. They focus very well on development planning in individual subject areas and with whole school issues. A number of senior staff are currently taking whole school responsibilities very effectively until the new deputy headteacher is appointed. There is some inconsistency in the extent to which the monitoring of teaching and learning is rigorously carried out in departments.
52. Governors are very involved with the school. They provide very good leadership and help shape the direction of development. Development planning is very clearly established and governors debate issues actively in committee meetings. They have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities well and keeps parents well informed. Clear policies to ensure statutory requirements on race equality and disability discrimination legislation are in place and regularly monitored.
53. The school is committed to its policies for ensuring that the school is highly inclusive. The overwhelming ethos is one of care and consideration of the needs of individuals, irrespective of their ability, ethnic background or any special need. The excellent provision for moral and social development underpins the approach to leadership and management of the curriculum for all pupils.
54. The overall management of special educational needs is very good. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) provides good leadership and oversees the implementation of the special needs policy. Day-to-day aspects and the work of the LSAs are very well managed by a designated LSA who has responsibility for the deployment and development of the learning support team. There is a designated governor who liaises with the SENCO on a regular basis, raises issues with the governors as appropriate, and reports to parents on an annual basis. A co-ordinator to manage the provision for gifted and talented pupils has recently been appointed and is committed to reviewing the register, the criteria for inclusion and developing practice.
55. Systems and procedures for the monitoring and review of teaching and learning are still developing. Lesson observations are an accepted part of the procedure for all staff. Targets linked to the school development plan are set and there is a clear focus on the improvement of teaching and learning. Internal review of departments, by the leadership team using national framework criteria, is becoming clearly established and identifies strengths and weaknesses much the same as those identified by the inspection team. Procedures for the induction of all new staff are very good. Newly qualified teachers are observed teaching on a regular basis and very good support is provided to help them achieve targets set as a result of these observations. Professional development of staff is often linked to school development priorities and staff have very good access to a range of training opportunities. Recruitment and retention of staff has improved over the last year and the school has a clear view of strategies to both recruit and retain the best staff. Extra funding has been designated for the purpose of relieving staff of many of their administrative duties.
56. The school budget is managed excellently. All expenditures are systematically accounted for and the school is absolutely clear about its costs. Capital revenue funding is managed particularly well because of the close co-operation between the school and outside agencies when working with contractors on building projects. The school makes the best possible use of advice in obtaining grants to facilitate its work. Spending is monitored excellently through the finance committee of the governing body. Its chairman is particularly helpful to the school in this respect. Appropriate contingency funds are maintained. The percentage of the budget carried forward has been high in order to fund refurbishment of buildings. Excellent forward planning has ensured that there is no budget deficit. Financial control is excellent. Audits are regularly carried out and its recommendations are followed.

57. The school seeks to obtain best value in managing and using its resources. The school improvement plan has clear objectives and strategies. It has targets for both the short term and the long term. An effective staff to pupil ratio has been maintained so that class sizes are appropriate as far as possible to the needs of pupils and this contributes to their very good achievement. The expenditure per pupil is considerably higher than in most schools. However expenditure is higher than other schools due to the cost of building work. School performance data is monitored well and appropriate action is taken. The management of the performance of staff is very good.

***Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003***

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	2,107,643
Total expenditure	2,269,510
Expenditure per pupil	3,672

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	326,264
Balance carried forward to the next	164,397

## **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

### **SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4**

#### **ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

##### **English**

Provision in English is **very good**.

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

- Pupils' excellent attitudes contribute to their very good achievement.
- Teachers challenge pupils very well to think and work independently.
- Very good leadership constantly seeks ways to maintain high standards and re-energise teaching.
- Computers are used well in English teaching but there is a need to develop higher-level ICT skills.
- Levels and GCSE grades are not consistently used to inform pupils about how well they are doing and to show how they can improve.

##### **Commentary**

58. The Year 9 National Curriculum test results in 2003 were above the national average and well above those of schools with similar prior standards. Standards have risen in line with the national trend, with a peak in 2001. The GCSE results were well above average in both English and English literature. The percentage of pupils attaining A and B grades was well above average. All pupils are entered for the GCSE examination in literature, which is ten per cent higher than the average for all girls nationally. Achievement was very good for last year's Year 11. Current standards of work seen are well above average in Year 9 as they have been in previous years except 2003, which was a weaker year. Pupils' attainment on entry is broadly average and they are achieving very well. By the end of Year 9, higher-attaining pupils write lengthy, interesting, and detailed pieces. They can write both creatively, using the role of the narrator in imaginative ways, and also discuss different sides of a controversial issue.
59. By the end of Year 11, standards are well above average. The highest attaining pupils write very stylishly and accurately. They can also explain why a writer chooses to use a particular technique and show the powerful effect that language can have. All pupils are introduced to a range of appropriately challenging literary texts. Middle and lower attaining pupils make particularly good progress in learning about literature and in structuring essays. Pupils achieve very well across the school in English and literature. Pupils' oral skills develop very well from Year 7 to Year 11. Teachers plan many opportunities for discussion and encourage pupils to assess their own performance. Standards of speaking and listening are well above average by the end of Year 11. There are no significant differences in the achievement of pupils with special educational needs or those with English as an additional language compared with other pupils.
60. Pupils learn very well as a result of very good teaching. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and challenge them very effectively. Lessons are conducted at a brisk pace, and many opportunities are taken to get pupils to work in pairs and groups and to demonstrate aspects of textual analysis using an overhead projector. These methods help to keep pupils interested and very well motivated. Their excellent attitudes, too, play a major part in their high levels of achievement. Learning support assistants make a very good contribution to lessons in which they support pupils with special educational needs, who achieve very well, along with all other pupils.

61. Computers are used well in English lessons, particularly for presentations and research. There is room, however, to develop higher-level ICT skills further to enable pupils to write even better. English plays a very good part in developing pupils' understanding of spiritual, moral and cultural issues. This is done through studying novels and poems, through discussion and in pupils' own writing. Written work is helpfully marked, but not all teachers indicate the level or GCSE grade at which the pupils are attaining. This means that they do not always have a completely clear understanding of how well they are doing and how they could improve.
62. The department is very well led. The head of department has a clear, strategic vision, and is mindful of finding new ways to engage pupils, develop the teaching team and maintain high standards. The department has made very good improvement since the previous inspection. High standards have been maintained, the quality of teaching has risen significantly and schemes of work have been completely overhauled, to take account of recent government initiatives in the teaching of literacy.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

63. Literacy skills are well above average across the school. They are developed very well in many subjects. There is a very good emphasis on different kinds of writing in geography lessons, where pupils are encouraged to write creatively, for example imagining the experiences of a migrant and writing letters home. History, too, encourages pupils to write creatively and persuasively, such as writing about the experiences of slaves. The modern foreign languages department makes an excellent contribution to pupils' literacy skills by teaching rules of grammar and syntax very effectively. There are also very useful literacy catch-up sessions for targeted pupils, using the national literacy strategy progress units. There are key words displayed in classrooms reinforcing technical vocabulary and some subjects provide their own glossaries. However, spelling and punctuation mistakes are not corrected consistently across the school.

### **Modern Foreign Languages**

Provision in modern foreign languages is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' achievement is excellent in Spanish, very good in French and is strongly supported by pupils' excellent attitudes to learning.
- Gifted and talented pupils achieve excellently because their learning needs are extremely well served.
- Pupils express themselves confidently in creative writing, which is available for all pupils to read.
- Teaching and learning are excellent in Spanish, and result in detailed understanding of the Hispanic culture.
- Assessment in Years 7 to 9 needs linking more closely to National Curriculum levels, to give pupils fuller awareness of their progress.
- Some pupils in the lower French sets in Years 7 to 9 make insufficient progress because work is not well matched to their needs.

### **French and Spanish**

64. In 2003, GCSE results in modern languages were well above average overall, being well above average in French and very high in Spanish. The proportions of A\*/A grades were well above average in both languages.
65. In the current Year 9, standards overall are above average. In French standards are well above average and in Spanish, standards are average. Achievement is very good in French, and

excellent in Spanish, given pupils' rapid progress within the limited time available. In French, some pupils in the lower sets make slower progress because the scheme of work teachers follow does not fully match their rate of learning. In Years 10 and 11, standards are very high and pupils' achievement is excellent in both languages, reflected in the well above average proportion gaining top grades. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well. The achievement of gifted and talented pupils is excellent in all years owing to challenging learning opportunities.

66. Pupils make excellent progress in listening and speaking, owing to the teachers' consistent use of the foreign language in which most are fluent or native speakers. In reading, pupils make very good progress in both languages because teachers plan challenging homework tasks. In writing, pupils' use of vocabulary and structure is confident; this leads to a wide range of excellent creative writing in French and Spanish, including descriptions, poetry, accounts and reports, much of which is available in the library for other pupils to read. Pupils use ICT well to present written work. Pupils behave very well, and have excellent attitudes to learning.
67. Teaching and learning are very good overall; in Spanish teaching is excellent. Teachers use their high quality resources effectively, motivating all pupils. In Spanish, the teacher's own love of the Hispanic culture inspires the pupils. Assessment is good overall; marking is detailed, and pupils carefully monitor their own and others' progress. However, formal testing is inconsistent, and not always clearly enough linked to the National Curriculum levels.
68. Leadership and management are very good. The acting departmental head gives very good direction for maintaining very high standards. Improvement since the last report is very good. GCSE standards, pupils' pronunciation and writing have all substantially improved, and ICT is now used well.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are well above average.
- Pupils' attitudes are excellent, contributing significantly to their overall very good achievement.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Computers are not used sufficiently well in the teaching of mathematics.
- The challenge to pupils' learning is sometimes not good enough.

### **Commentary**

69. Standards at the end of Year 9 in the 2003 tests were above the national average. Standards were well above the average for similar schools based on pupils' standards on entry to the school in Year 7. The number of pupils reaching or exceeding the level expected for their age was well above the national average. Standards at the end of Year 11 in the 2003 GCSE for the number of pupils with grades A\* - C were well above the national average. All pupils earned a grade. Performance was similar to English and science. Standards are rising in line with national trends.
70. Standards seen in the inspection are above average in Year 9 and well above average in Year 11. Overall standards on entry are broadly average. Achievement from Year 7 to 11 is very good as a result of good teaching and, particularly, the excellent attitudes of pupils. It is notable that many pupils of average standards on entry to the school in Year 7 reach levels well above average in Year 11. Pupils with special educational needs and a few lower attaining pupils achieve well. Support for them is very good in lessons but their achievement is limited as concepts are not well developed and they have difficulty in remembering earlier work. Gifted

and talented pupils achieve well, limited in some lessons by the lack of challenge. The work in Year 7 picks up slowly from earlier work, lacking challenge in some lessons because it is too easy for pupils to do.

71. Learning and teaching are good overall. In the range of lessons observed during the inspection, the majority of the teaching was good, with approximately equal proportions of very good and satisfactory teaching. In the good teaching seen pupils are encouraged very well. They work hard in lessons and persevere well, even when they find the work difficult. The subject expertise of the teachers is good overall and this results in accurate and clear explanations, from which pupils learn well. The attitudes of pupils to their work are excellent, seen in their very good use of homework, for example. There is plenty for them to do. It is a major factor in their overall achievement. Exercise books are very neatly set out and regularly marked well. Teaching is at its best when learning builds very effectively on previous work through very good lesson planning, moving the learning experience on at a good pace. However, sometimes the work set is too easy. Pupils have above average skills in ICT but insufficient use is made of computers to reinforce mathematics learning further, in both graph work and number work.
72. Leadership and management are good. The school has eliminated staffing difficulties of the recent past and leadership has established a good team of teachers. Monitoring of the subject's work has begun well following the appointment of a new head of department 18 months ago. Further development is required for standards to increase, particularly in the monitoring of teaching and the use of assessment to set targets for pupils in terms of National Curriculum levels. Improvement since the last inspection is good, as achievement has improved and standards have been maintained.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

73. Overall, use of mathematics across the curriculum is good. Use is very good in geography as pupils interpret figures from tables very well. They use a wide variety of graphs and charts. Use is good in ICT, mathematics and science. Pupils draw accurate graphs in science and use simple formulae well. They understand the importance of averaging the results of experimental work, for example. In ICT, spreadsheets and databases are used well through good use of formulae. More advanced use is made of spreadsheets in the business applications course. Use of mathematics is satisfactory in art, design and technology and history. Graphical work is used well in history; incorrect use of scale on time lines is a weakness. Standards are above average overall because the teaching is good.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

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

- Very good staff/pupil relationships enhance pupils' achievement.
- ICT is used very effectively to promote pupils' learning.
- Good use of homework consolidates pupils' learning.
- The very good broad knowledge shown by teachers enriches pupils' experience of science.
- An efficient and dedicated technician team gives very good teaching support.
- Pupils' understanding of how and what they need to learn is not strong enough.
- More liaison with primary schools is necessary to avoid curriculum overlap in Year 7.
- More extra-curricular provision would capture younger pupils' enthusiasm and enhance their interest in science.

#### **Commentary**



74. Standards are rising. Results in 2003 showed that by the end of Year 9, standards were above the national average. Standards seen are above average and reflect performance in tests. The majority of pupils achieve very well due to good teaching and also to the excellent attitudes pupils display to their learning. For example, in a Year 7 class studying human reproduction, good interaction between the teacher and the class ensured positive discussion took place; pupils made good contributions and listened to what others had to say. By Year 9, pupils are able to build on existing knowledge and make predictions, as shown by a class trying to identify an unknown metal. Not only were pupils able to make valid deductions from practical tests, but also reference to the Internet allowed them to confirm their conclusions, place the metal correctly in the reactivity series and identify it. There are no significant differences in the achievement of pupils with special educational needs or those with English as an additional language compared with other pupils.
75. While the 2003 GCSE results showed that standards were well above national averages for both double and single award, the relatively higher proportion of pupils taking single award resulted in science standards overall being above the national average. Standards of work observed were above average, particularly in the case of notebooks and coursework, where presentation and content were exemplary. Overall achievement of pupils is very good. The large proportion of high grades, both at double and single award, reflects this very good achievement, which again is, in part, due to the excellent attitudes of the pupils. Very good use of the Internet was seen in a Year 10 class investigating energy conservation. They were able to find details of current government policy and to match these with methods of generating electricity from non-fossil fuel sources. A Year 11 class measuring angles of incidence and reflection showed good practical and observation skills. They were articulate, as well as confident, in their explanations of what they were doing. Good teacher awareness and support ensure that pupils with special educational needs in all years achieve well in line with their capabilities. Girls who do not have English as a first language achieve very well in line with the majority of pupils. Gifted and talented pupils achieve well, though they could benefit from yet more challenge. Out-of-school visits and joint project work with other schools contribute well to the depth of their scientific understanding.
76. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers are confident in their knowledge of the subject, and the breadth of their knowledge enhances pupils' learning as was seen in a class applying their understanding of light reflection to other forms of energy, such as radio-waves. Lessons are well planned and are conducted at a pace that is well adjusted to pupils' ability. However, in some lessons there was too much reliance on textbook activities when more variety could have stimulated a greater response from pupils. Teachers summarise well at the end of lessons, though occasionally insufficient time is allowed to make this fully effective. Good use of homework consolidates pupils' knowledge and understanding and develops their independent learning skills. Marking is thorough, and while pupils' work contains many positive comments, there is a need for more subject-specific information and guidance.
77. Science staff work effectively together and are well led by the head of department. A dedicated team of technicians provide very good support. Good teaching practice is shared, and the head of department conducts regular effective monitoring of teaching and marking. This is an improvement since the last report. All staff in the department have good opportunities for personal development. Records of pupils' performance are comprehensive and easily accessible, though these need to be placed on a proper database to improve their effectiveness. The department provides good support for learning outside the timetable, but there is room for additional extra-curricular science to capture the enthusiasm of younger pupils. Since the last inspection improvement has been good. Good links have been established with primary schools although the focus on continuity of the curriculum is still in need of development, monitoring of teaching and learning has improved and marking of pupils' work is more rigorous. The refurbishment of accommodation has produced a pleasant and effective teaching environment.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning in business and communications systems in Years 10 and 11 is very good.
- Pupils' interest, application and productivity are excellent.
- Achievement is good overall.
- The method of assessment in Year 7 to 9 overestimates standards.
- The application of ICT in other subjects needs to be mapped against national requirements and assessed separately.

### Commentary

78. Standards on entry to the school are broadly in line with the national average. By the time pupils reach the end of Year 9 standards are above the national average. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated in lessons and make satisfactory progress with extra help from teachers and learning assistants. Individual assignments enable gifted and talented pupils to work independently and they achieve well. Standards seen in lessons are above average overall and achievement from Year 7 is good.
79. Almost 80 per cent of pupils take the business and communications systems course in Years 10 and 11. There are two areas of the National Curriculum requirements that are not included in this course but are well covered elsewhere. In 2003, the GCSE examination results were well above the national average. All pupils obtained A\* - G grades. Standards seen in lessons are well above average at this stage in the course and achievement from Years 9 to 11 is good overall. The 20 per cent of pupils who do not take the business course achieve satisfactorily in their acquisition of knowledge and skills in ICT through other subjects.
80. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 is good overall. All teachers have excellent knowledge of the subject and plan lessons very effectively. Course materials are very good. All work is introduced very well and demonstrations of the work using computerised overhead projectors are very effective. Teachers involve pupils well by asking questions and give very effective help and advice to pupils in practical activities. However, assessment is not well enough utilised.
81. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 10 and 11 is good overall. It is very good in the business and communications course and satisfactory through other subjects of the curriculum. Pupils learn by undertaking assignments based on the workplace environment, human resources, running of business and use of ICT in businesses very well. In Year 10, teachers were seen working very effectively in teams. Teachers have high expectations.
82. Curriculum leadership by the newly appointed head of department is good and he is well supported by his colleagues. All are keen to improve standards. ICT applications in Years 10 and 11 are beginning to be mapped across subjects in relation to the National Curriculum requirements and to be separately assessed to ensure that all pupils receive their ICT entitlement. Teacher assessments in previous years have been generous and procedures are being revised to ensure greater reliability.
83. Improvement since the last inspection is good. Standards, particularly in Years 10 and 11, and the quality of teaching and learning have improved. Resources have been improved although further upgrading is required. The lack of a computer network manager is a barrier to improvement.

### Information and communication technology across the curriculum

84. The application of ICT in other subjects is satisfactory overall. In science computers are used well in lessons and pupils are taught data logging and monitoring effectively. ICT is used well in coursework. In design and technology computers are used effectively and pupils are taught computer control well. In modern foreign languages text is processed and work published in a number of European languages effectively. Computers are used satisfactorily in English, geography, history, mathematics and music. In citizenship the Internet is used to research the local area and publish work effectively but should be more widely used in other aspects of the subject. The use of ICT in physical education is unsatisfactory and needs improvement.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **Geography**

Provision in geography is **good**.

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

- Very good leadership and management are helping to raise standards.
- Teaching and learning are good overall and very good in Years 10 and 11.
- Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own work and this increases their motivation.
- Very positive classroom relationships have created a productive working environment.
- Single period lessons in many classes in Years 7 to 9 restrict the range of teaching and learning styles and limit opportunities for pupils to take greater responsibility for their own learning.
- Limited access to computer facilities in Years 7 to 9 places constraints on pupils' ability to undertake independent research.

#### **Commentary**

85. Standards as seen in Years 7 to 9 are above average and pupils' achievement is good. Standards in the 2003 GCSE examination and in work seen in Years 10 and 11 are in line with the national average. This is because many of the pupils opting for the subject are from the lower half of the ability range. Nevertheless, at GCSE very good systems of assessment and close monitoring of coursework enable pupils to achieve very well in relation to their modest entry standards for the course. There are no significant differences in the achievement of pupils with special educational needs or those with English as an additional language compared with other pupils.
86. The quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. This is a key factor in raising standards. Teachers have a very good knowledge of their subject, plan lessons to meet the needs of the full ability range of pupils and set clear learning objectives. Key geographical skills are well taught throughout the school. Very good relationships encourage all pupils to play an active role in their learning and to respond enthusiastically to new challenges. Teachers use praise and sensitive encouragement to enable pupils with special educational needs and other learning difficulties to play an active role in classroom learning. Achievement and teaching are less effective in Years 7 to 9 because too many single lessons prevent teachers from fully developing their normal usage of group and pair work. These teaching methods motivate pupils and raise standards, but their effectiveness is limited in shorter timetabled lessons.
87. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. There is a strong team ethos. Systems to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and staff development are very strong. The tracking of pupils' progress is very good in Years 10 and 11 but needs to be further developed in Years 7 to 9. There are very good computer assignments built into the excellent

schemes of work, but restricted access to computer facilities in Years 7 to 9 limits opportunities for pupils to improve their Internet research skills. Good progress has been made since the last inspection.

## History

Provision in history is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attitudes and application to study are excellent.
- Very good teaching enables pupils to learn very well.
- Achievement in Year 7 to 9 is less good than in Years 10 and 11, because curriculum time in Year 9 is short.
- Higher-attaining pupils do very well at GCSE level.
- Pupils' independence in their learning could be more fully developed by a wider range of teaching methods.
- Assessment procedures do not give pupils clear enough guidance for improvement.

### Commentary

88. In 2003, teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 showed standards were average. In the GCSE examinations the proportion of pupils achieving grades A\* to C was well above average. Over one-quarter of candidates achieved an A\*, which was very high compared to the roughly one-twelfth who did so nationally in 2002.
89. Standards of work seen at the end of Year 9 were above average and pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. They have a good understanding of causation and select and deploy information well from a range of evidence. Their literacy is very good and they interpret sources well, although many, especially lower-attaining pupils, find source analysis and evaluation more challenging. There is a relatively short allocation of curriculum time in Year 9 and this has some impact on the achievement of pupils at this stage.
90. By the end of Year 11 work seen is well above average and achievement is very good, as shown by the above average proportion of pupils working at the highest levels. This is because pupils regularly practise examination questions and recall and deploy prior knowledge well in their answers. They have a good understanding of subject specific terminology and use computers extensively for communication purposes, although less so for research. Most pupils demonstrate well-developed source interrogation and evaluation skills.
91. The quality of teaching and is very good. Excellent behaviour and very positive attitudes to the opportunities offered them play a significant role in pupils' very good learning. Teachers have considerable subject expertise and make very good use of question and answer to focus, probe and/or extend pupils' learning. Detailed lesson planning and good pace, reinforced by challenging homework, also make an important contribution. Pupils' confidence and independence in their learning is sometimes undermined because of the prevalence of teacher-centred and directed lessons, or the occasional tendency to tell, rather than ask. Pupils' work is marked regularly and although spelling errors are occasionally overlooked, helpful comment is included; however, clearer and more consistent assessment procedures would offer pupils better guidance on the scope for improvement.
92. The subject is very well managed and led. The head of department has worked closely with the local education authority consultant to raise standards, with conspicuous success. A good range of visits extends pupils' experience well and improvement since the last inspection has been good.

## TECHNOLOGY

### Design and Technology

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

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' relationships with pupils and the help they give to pupils in practical activities are very good.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good.
- The scheme of work and tasks do not always challenge pupils sufficiently.
- Pupils' designing and making skills are not sufficiently developed in some aspects of the subject in Years 7 to 9.
- There is insufficient technical support for teaching and learning.

#### Commentary

93. Standards on entry to the school are variable but broadly in line with the national average. By the time pupils reach the end of Year 9 standards remain average. Standards seen are variable but broadly average overall. Achievement is satisfactory. Gifted and talented students make the same progress as other students. Pupils with special educational needs also make satisfactory progress with the extra help from teachers and learning assistants.
94. All pupils take the subject in Years 10 and 11. In 2003, the results in the GCSE examinations were above the national average overall; seven out of ten pupils obtained A\* - C grades. The results have been similar for the past four years. Pupils performed best in graphic products and food technology. In the previous year, pupils performed best in textiles and resistant materials. Standards seen are above average overall. Achievement is good. One in four pupils opt to take a course in child development. In 2003, the GCSE examination results were well above the national average; nearly seven out of ten pupils obtained A\* - C grades. Whilst ICT is used well in some lessons, its use in coursework to present work, research topics and analyse results is not sufficiently widespread.
95. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. It is good in Years 10 and 11. In Years 7 to 9 it is no more than satisfactory because the level of task is often not very challenging or particularly stimulating. Pupils learn by undertaking design and make assignments in their chosen material or graphic products. However, some of the assignments are not sufficiently challenging to enable the most able pupils to demonstrate their capability fully. All teachers have a very good relationship with pupils and plan lessons well. They have a secure knowledge of the subject and manage pupils very well in lessons. Pupils are basically keen to learn and behave very well. All teachers give very good help and advice in practical activities. Teachers invariably involve pupils well by asking them questions and demonstrating work well.
96. The leadership and day-to-day management are satisfactory. The head of department does not have enough time to provide the good leadership needed to raise standards in all aspects of the subject. There is a shortage of technician support. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. Standards have remained broadly the same. The monitoring of teaching is more embedded and the quality of the accommodation has been improved.

## VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design and music were inspected in full. **Drama** was sampled, both within English and in Years 10 and 11 where there is a drama GCSE option. In 2003 GCSE drama results were well below average, although in 2002 they were average. Pupils start the course with standards that are

below average, and whilst they achieve well in their knowledge and understanding of plays, their practical skills develop less securely. In two lessons seen, pupils learnt a satisfactory amount about how to use improvisational techniques to portray character and plot. The school does not have a specialist drama teacher and is trying to find the best way to support the pupils' learning, partly by generous, but non-specialist, staffing. There is no drama studio, and most lessons take place in the school hall, which lacks the technical equipment both to create atmosphere and teach pupils about theatrical techniques. Pupils are, however, enthusiastic about the subject and particularly enjoy the rehearsals for the annual production.

## **Art & Design**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good teaching enables pupils to learn very well.
- Excellent marking and feedback to pupils informs them how to improve their work.
- Very good planning ensures the needs of all pupils are met.
- ICT is used well but not creatively enough.
- There is insufficient large-scale work.

### **Commentary**

97. Pupils arrive at the school with standards in art generally below those expected nationally. By the end of Year 9, they are working at above average standards. Pupils' achievement is very good between Years 7 and 9. They gain an understanding in the basic skills of drawing, using colour and pattern in a variety of materials, including three-dimensional work, and learn about the work of artists and craftspeople in Europe and abroad.
98. Staff changes affected GCSE results in 2001 and 2002 when the percentage of A\*-C grades was below average. Stable staffing for the last two years has led to results rising steeply to be well above average in 2003. Pupils at present in Year 11 are working at a level well above the national average. They achieve very well due to high quality individual care from teachers and their own very good attitudes to work.
99. Achievement is very good in all years for those with special educational needs, those for whom English is an additional language, and those who have been identified as gifted and talented.
100. The quality of teaching and learning is very good with excellent use of marking, assessment and verbal feedback to pupils informing improvement. Planning is very thorough and meets the needs of different pupils. It incorporates high levels of challenge whilst providing good support. ICT is used well, but more often as a research tool. There is a wide variety of work but a lack of it on a large scale. Pupils are often inspired to create their artwork by working on location and understand the context of artists' work by visiting galleries and museums both here and abroad.
101. The quality of leadership and management is very good because teachers work well together in a team which is critical yet supportive. Stronger links with feeder primary schools are seen as a way of improving pupils' skills by the time they arrive in Year 7. Improvement since the last inspection is very good, as all issues raised have been addressed.

## **Music**

Provision in music is **very good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good opportunities, including extensive extra-curricular activities, are provided for all pupils.
- Limited accommodation is restricting the acquisition of much needed resources, creating a barrier to further opportunities for raising achievement.
- The pupils' positive attitudes to the subject and the excellent relationship with the teacher contribute positively to learning.
- There is insufficient rigour given to the use of assessment in tracking pupils' progress.

## Commentary

102. The proportion of pupils attaining A\* to C grades in the 2003 GCSE examinations was average when compared with national figures. These results are similar to those achieved in 2002. Standards seen at the end of Year 9 are above average. Prior to coming to the school, the experience of many pupils in music is below average and achievement is therefore very good. Standards seen in Year 11 are above average and the few pupils who have currently chosen the option achieve very well in relation to their modest prior attainment on entry to the course.
103. Teaching and learning are very good in Years 7 to 11. Pupils in Year 7 to 9 follow a practically based course in which the basic rudiments are absorbed alongside worthwhile performing and composing experiences. The teacher's very good subject knowledge and teaching expertise enable pupils actively to experience learning for themselves. Well-planned lessons and resources contribute further to pupils' learning with the result that all present are able to contribute to the group or class ensembles at a level appropriate to their own musical ability. Learning support assistants collaborate well with the teacher in ensuring that supported pupils gain maximum learning opportunities in lessons. Pupils' very positive attitudes to the subject and their excellent relationship with the teacher also play an important part in their learning.
104. The breadth of the curriculum in music is very good. However, 35-minute lessons are short and erode pupils' learning time, as instruments have to be distributed and collected in each lesson. The curriculum for Years 10 to 11 is based on the examination requirements, with the knowledge acquired in Year 7 to 9 providing a good foundation. Further challenge for the more musically able is provided by a broad range of extra-curricular activities, which support instrumental lessons provided by members of Thurrock Music Service.
105. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. Peripatetic teachers' work is thoroughly organised and monitored. The involvement of pupils, and of parents, is very well managed. Pupils are inspired by the exceptional efforts of the head of department to pursue even greater skill and raise their achievement. Talented pupils are very well supported and encouraged. While the results of assessment are being used to influence curriculum planning, their use in tracking pupils' progress and setting targets is not as rigorous as it might be.
106. Since the last inspection all of the practical issues raised have been thoroughly addressed. However the accommodation remains too small with over 30 pupils in many lessons. This remains a barrier to more effective teaching and achievement. There is still a lack of use of ICT facilities as an integral part of lessons. Overall improvement in provision for music has been satisfactory.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attitudes of pupils are very good and there are good relationships between pupils and staff.
- Assessment of pupils is unsatisfactory and is not being used well enough to support pupils' achievement.
- Teaching and learning are not sufficiently monitored.
- Planning and analysis of performance in dance and gymnastics in Years 7 – 9 is very good.
- Single lessons limit the time for the appropriate development of skills and so restrict pupils' achievement in Years 7 to 9.
- Higher-attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged.

## Commentary

107. Standards attained by pupils approaching the end of Year 9 are average. This represents satisfactory achievement for most, although higher-attaining pupils do not achieve appropriately in some activities. Year 7 and 8 pupils have a good range of movement in dance and good choreographic skills, although the quality of their movement is below average. Their very good skills in the analysis of performance are having a positive effect on their achievement.
108. GCSE examination results were below average in 2003, and achievement of pupils last year in relation to their prior attainment was unsatisfactory. The small year group of generally lower-attaining pupils and also staffing instability accounted for the relatively low standards in 2003. Standards seen for the current Year 11 pupils are much closer to the national average and their achievement is good. They have a good understanding of the components of fitness and of anatomy and physiology although this knowledge is only rarely applied to practical aspects of sport. Non-examination pupils achieve well in their dance lessons and have good choreographic skills and very good planning skills, which they use to good effect when preparing their own dance performances.
109. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. It is good in Years 10 and 11. Teaching and learning are only satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 because short single lessons are not providing the appropriate amount of time for effective development of skills. Also In Year 9 some pupils are not timetabled for the same number of lessons as others in the year group and their achievement is further restricted.
110. Pupils benefit from knowledgeable and enthusiastic teachers who enjoy very good relationships with pupils. The very good attitude of pupils is a significant factor in the good learning seen in most lessons. Most lessons contain a good range of activities and are well planned. In a minority of lessons planning lacks the necessary detail to ensure that all pupils are being appropriately challenged. Occasionally the class teacher is missing opportunities to intervene with pupils to help effect improvement and the support teacher is not used effectively.
111. Although assessment procedures have improved, assessment is not being used well enough to provide appropriate information to help pupils know how to improve their levels of standards. This is especially noticeable in the GCSE course where assessment of theory work provides insufficient information for pupils on their present GCSE standards and little guidance on how they could improve. Year 11 GCSE pupils do not have the appropriate information on their achievement in practical activities to effect improvement. Opportunities to use ICT are still developing but good use of a video camera to evaluate performance was seen in a dance lesson. Pupils on the GCSE course use word processing successfully.
112. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The newly appointed head of department has already begun to effect changes in assessment procedures, which have been unsatisfactory, and has addressed the development of more appropriate schemes of work to provide guidance in teaching. The day-to-day organisation of the department is good but long term development



planning is yet to be clearly established. There is, as yet, insufficient monitoring of teaching and learning.

113. The department provides a range of activities at lunchtime and after school. Extra-curricular opportunities are offered but the department is working towards development and an improvement in pupil participation rates. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is being successfully organised and over 50 pupils are involved this year. There is a range of fixtures with other schools and the school has very successful netball teams, providing good opportunities for pupils in competitive sports.
114. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Time in lessons for pupils in Years 10 and 11 has increased and the numbers of pupils studying for the GCSE examination have increased significantly although this was not the case for the 2003 examinations.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION (PSHE) AND CITIZENSHIP**

Citizenship is reported in full below. PSHE was sampled through a study of planning. This is very thorough with plenty of supportive material provided and parent governors also involved in planning. Themes are matched very well to issues that are particularly appropriate to girls, which allow them to be prepared for adult life in the community. Sex and relationships education and issues relating to alcohol and drugs misuse feature in the programme.

### **Citizenship**

Provision in citizenship is **very good**.

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

- All pupils are taught the main elements of the subject through a well-developed PSHE and citizenship programme.
- The high level of participation of pupils in active citizenship in the school makes a significant contribution to their personal development.
- The regular monitoring and evaluation of the course by pupils, teachers and parent governors helps ensure that it is very effective.
- Assessment is not yet fully developed in all aspects of the subject.

### **Commentary**

115. The standards in citizenship are well above average. The very good provision ensures that all pupils achieve very well. The main elements of the subject are well integrated with the school's PSHE programme, which is confidently delivered by form teachers to all pupils. The course is further enhanced by a series of visiting speakers. Other subjects contribute to pupils' very good understanding as seen during the inspection in, for example, science. Pupils' personal development is greatly enriched by an effective school council that seeks to involve all pupils in a democratic process. Pupils also have opportunity to engage in active citizenship by participation in fund-raising for charities, and a range of community service opportunities organised on a form, year or school basis.
116. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Lessons are very well planned and are accompanied by a carefully produced activity book for each year group. Pupils are fully involved in the lessons, with ample opportunity for reflection on personal attitudes and beliefs and for active participation. For example, in a very good lesson in Year 10 pupils worked well in groups to establish the effects and legal status of different drugs.
117. The leadership and management of the subject are both very good. The scheme of work is securely based on national criteria and was drawn up after extensive consultation. The co-ordinator works closely with the PSHE coordinator to ensure effective delivery of the subject.

The programme is regularly reviewed, taking account of the views of pupils, teachers and parent governors. Form teachers have had appropriate training and are regularly monitored and supported by year heads. Teachers are currently reporting fully on pupils' level of classroom participation and on the extent to which they are involved in active citizenship. The assessment of their knowledge and understanding, however, is not yet fully developed.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>2</b>
Pupils' achievement	2
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>1</b>
Attendance	2
Attitudes	1
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	1
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
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	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	3

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