

Ofsted Inspection of Sarah Bonnell School – 13-16 October 2003

ADDENDUM

Following additional guidance from Ofsted the Registered Inspector is pleased to be able to make the following changes to the Ofsted report for Sarah Bonnell School concerning the role of governors. The governance of the school is now judged satisfactory with good features in spite of the inability of the school to hold a daily act of collective worship for all students.

PART A SUMMARY

Revised paragraph for Leadership and Management in the summary report for parents.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management throughout the school are good. The leadership of the headteacher and her senior staff is particularly good. They have a very clear vision for the school's future which is reflected in all its work. Heads of year and subject managers carry out their tasks well overall, but some are better than others at leading their area forward. . The governance of the school has many good features and is satisfactory overall. Governors are supportive of the school, and know its strengths and weaknesses. They are beginning to take a greater role in key policy development. Financial management is very good.

PART B Commentary

Revised paragraph 50 in the main section of the report on Leadership and management.

50 The work of the governing body is satisfactory overall with some good features. The governing body is committed and representative of the local community. A significant number of parents show their commitment to the school by being members of the governing body. Governors clearly know the strengths and weaknesses of the school and the chair of governors and the chairs of its committees are well informed of the school's work. The governors work well with the staff of the school who frequently attend governor meetings to report on their work and answer questions. Developing subject links are helping governors to be more rigorous in judging the effectiveness of new initiatives and spending. The governors have their own clear action plan to improve their knowledge and understanding of the work of the school. They recognise that whilst they review policy and contribute to the school improvement plan they do not take a large enough role in the initial discussions. The process is to change this year. Although assemblies provide a good spiritual experience for students, the governing body is unable to ensure the school holds a daily act of collective worship for all students. The governing body recognises it does not meet this statutory requirement but in spite of reasonable efforts it is unable to do so. This is due to insufficient space and too few teachers willing to lead small group acts of worship.

PART D of the Report

Judgement on governance is 4 and not 5.

INSPECTION REPORT

SARAH BONNELL SCHOOL

London

LEA area: Newham

Unique reference number: 102785

Headteacher: Ms C Tooley

Lead inspector: Jan Allcorn

Dates of inspection: 13th – 16th October 2003

Inspection number: 261546

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Specialist Language College
School category:	Community
Age range of students:	11 – 16
Gender of students:	Female
Number on roll:	1184
School address:	Deanery Road London
Postcode:	E15 4LP
Telephone number:	020 8534 6791
Fax number:	020 8555 3793
Appropriate authority:	Local Education Authority
Name of chair of governors:	Jervine Young
Date of previous inspection:	28 / 9 / 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Sarah Bonnell is a popular 11-16 school for girls. The ethnic mix of the student population is very diverse, reflecting well-established, large communities of White, Asian, Black Caribbean and Black African families in the local area. There is a relatively small number of students whose families are seeking asylum in the UK, and a small number of students with Irish Traveller heritage. A high proportion of girls is eligible for free school meals in this inner city area of East London, which is one of the most deprived in the country. Although the percentage of students who speak English as an additional language is high compared with national and London averages, the number of students at the early stages of learning English is comparatively low. The number of students entering the school mid-term is also low for London. Attainment on entry to the school is below average, although that for current Year 7 students is close to the national average. The proportion of students who have special educational needs, including those with statements, is in line with national averages. Under the Excellence in Cities scheme the school has a Learning Support Unit for students who display disaffection or disruptive behaviour. The aim of the unit is to improve behaviour and communication skills and to reintegrate students successfully into classes. Since September 2003 the school has been a specialist language college. All girls study two languages up to the age of 14 years and at least one at GCSE. The range of languages covers both European and community languages such as Urdu and Bengali.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1068	Jan Allcorn	Lead inspector	
9614	Carolyn Webb	Lay inspector	
32875	Nick Batchelar	Team inspector	English
33009	Gina O'Connor	Team inspector	Mathematics
5714	Frances Thornton	Team inspector	Science
32395	Avril Phillips	Team inspector	Modern languages
11969	John Hardy	Team inspector	Information technology Design and technology
31701	Graeme Rudland	Team inspector	Music
31037	Ann Barwell	Team inspector	Physical education
18854	Malcolm McGregor	Team inspector	Art and design
33170	Julie Winterman	Team inspector	Religious education
32572	Kate Evans	Team inspector	Citizenship Special educational needs English as an additional language
30317	Elizabeth Barthaud	Team inspector	History
3755	Trevor Hulbert	Team inspector	Geography

The inspection contractor was:

Altecq Education

102 Bath Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire

GL53 7JX

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Sarah Bonnell is an effective and successful school that is always looking to improve its work. **It provides good value for money.** Enthusiastically and very well led by the headteacher and senior staff, it has a clear vision for the future and high expectations of work and behaviour. Students achieve well by the time they leave the school, often from below average standards on entry in Year 7. Most continue their studies after the age of 16 years. The very good relationships throughout the school create a very good learning environment. Teaching is good. Governors are supportive and developing good practices to ensure the school's effectiveness.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The girls make much better progress than most girls nationally by the time they leave school.
- The girls have very positive attitudes to their work and want to succeed.
- Students from a wide range of ethnic groups get on very well with each other.
- Mathematics, drama, design and technology, GCSE music and personal, social, health and religious education are strengths.
- Standards in science in Years 7 to 9, in information and communication technology and in French require improvement.
- Throughout the school leadership and management are good, with some important strengths.
- The girls' reading, writing and speaking and listening skills are not yet strong enough to raise standards further, particularly the proportion of GCSE A*-C grades.
- Extra-curricular activities are a strength of the school.
- Staff are committed and have high expectations of work and behaviour.
- The work of learning support staff, whilst satisfactory overall, is not as effective as it could be.

Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. The school has continued to achieve much better GCSE results than similar schools. Results for 14 year olds in national tests have improved. In 2002 the school received the government's achievement award for GCSE results and in 1999 it became a Beacon school because of its good practice. Provision for religious education now meets statutory requirements. Accommodation has been upgraded, but in spite of its efforts the school has not been able improve the accommodation for physical education. Changes in staffing have hindered improvements in French. The use of learning support staff has improved but the school does not yet use the skills of these staff well enough.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Performance in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11, compared with:	All schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
	C	C	C	A

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

Achievement is good throughout the school. In national tests for 14 year olds in 2002 although the overall performance in the core subjects (English, mathematics and science) was below national averages, it was much better than that of similar schools. Results in 2003 are closer to provisional national averages, particularly in English and mathematics. Although results in science have improved, there is still some underachievement. At GCSE in 2002 the proportion of girls gaining **5 or more GCSE passes was well above the national proportion for girls.** Preliminary information gives a similar picture for 2003. However, although the girls make good progress, results at the higher GCSE A*-C grades remain below national averages for girls in most subjects, including the core subjects.

Students in Year 9 are working at average standards. This represents **good achievement** since their entry to the school in Year 7. Standards for Year 11 students are satisfactory but in the core subjects students are only on course to do well at the higher A*-C grades in mathematics. Standards in information and communication technology are below average throughout Years 8 to

11 because of insufficient teaching in the past. There are no significant differences in the performance of different ethnic groups. Students with special educational needs and English as an additional language generally achieve as well as other girls.

The students want to do well and work hard. Behaviour is good and in many lessons very good. This has a good impact on the standards students achieve. Students get on very well with each other and show respect for each other's cultures and beliefs. Attendance is above average. Opportunities for students to develop spiritually, to take responsibility, and to help others are very good. The personal, social, health and religious education programme significantly supports this aspect of the school's work.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching is good overall and best in Years 10 and 11. Most lessons are well planned and enable students to make good progress and achieve well. Teaching is least effective in Years 8 and 9 where occasionally a small number of students misbehave when teaching does not keep them interested. The curriculum reflects well the students' different cultural, learning, and personal needs. Effective extra-curricular activities broaden students' experiences, stretch the most able and support preparation for examinations. Good arrangements are in place to track students' progress although teachers do not always use the information as effectively as they could to inform teaching. Homework makes a good contribution to students' progress. Students' skills in reading, writing and speaking and listening whilst satisfactory are not sufficiently developed in all lessons to support greater achievement at the higher GCSE grades. Support and guidance for students are good. They are well cared for.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management throughout the school are good. The leadership of the headteacher and her senior staff is particularly good. They have a very clear vision for the school's future which is reflected in all its work. Heads of year and subject managers carry out their tasks well overall, but some are better than others at leading their area forward. Governors are supportive of the school, and know its strengths and weaknesses. They are beginning to take a greater role in key policy development. However although the governance of the school has many good features Ofsted criteria judge it unsatisfactory because governors do not ensure provision for a daily act of collective worship. Financial management is very good.

PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are pleased with the work of the school. Some parents feel that the new arrangements for reports and parents' meetings lack the opportunity for comment from individual teachers who teach their daughters. The school is already reviewing this. Girls are happy and pleased they attend Sarah Bonnell. Their main areas of concern are the toilets and lunchtime arrangements. The school works hard to maintain the toilets in a good condition. However, inspectors do agree with students and parents that canteen facilities are inadequate. The school cannot cope with the increased numbers now all girls remain in school at lunchtime.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- strategies to develop the highest possible reading, writing, and speaking and listening skills for all students
- raising standards in science for 11 to 14 year olds, and in information and communication technology and French for 11-16 year olds
- a strategic plan for future work with students with special educational needs and at the early stages of learning English

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- the provision of a daily act of collective worship.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Girls who attend Sarah Bonnell achieve well. They enter Sarah Bonnell with standards below or well below those expected nationally. Overall standards by the time the girls leave school at 16 years of age are close to those expected nationally. **Progress is better for students in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 7 to 9.** There are no significant differences in the performance of students from different ethnic groups. **The school has maintained the good achievement identified at the time of the last inspection.**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Performance at GCSE is much better than that of similar schools nationally, with nearly all students gaining five or more GCSE passes.
- The girls' positive attitudes to work contribute significantly to the good progress they make and the standards they achieve.
- Achievement is particularly good in mathematics, art, design and technology, drama, history, GCSE music, and personal, social, health and religious education.
- Standards and achievement in science for 11 to 14 year olds and in French are not high enough.
- Whilst teaching and learning are currently at least sound in information and communication technology, standards are too low because of unsatisfactory previous experiences.
- Many girls lack the reading, writing and speaking and listening skills to express complex ideas clearly enough to obtain the higher GCSE A*-C grades.
- The school monitors students' progress closely and sets ambitious targets for them.

Commentary

1. Until this year, students' attainment on entry to the school has been below or well below average. In particular speaking and listening, reading and writing skills are below average whether in English or in the girls' first language. A high proportion of students do not have English as their first language, but there are fewer students at the early stages of learning English. Preliminary information indicates the attainment of current Year 7 students is close to that nationally.

Key Stage 3

2. Students achieve well by the time they reach 14 years of age in most subject areas. Overall standards of work seen for this age group during the inspection were close to national expectations. They were in line with national expectations in English and mathematics and below in science. Good teaching following the introduction of the National Strategy for 11 to 14 year olds has supported well improvements in mathematics and English. In science, teaching which does not meet the needs of lower attaining students slows their progress and makes achievement overall unsatisfactory across Years 7 to 9.
3. Standards are particularly good in design and technology. This is because of very effective leadership and a clearly planned curriculum that is delivered well by the teaching staff. In religious education standards are good which is much better than at the time of the last inspection. Standards and achievement are weakest in French, and to some extent in Spanish, as lessons are not always delivered effectively enough. Consequently students do not behave well and their progress slows. Although teaching and learning are currently good in information and communication technology, difficulties of access to computers and staffing in previous years has led to unsatisfactory achievement over time and well below average standards.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	32.1 (30.6)	33.3 (33.0)
Mathematics	32.9 (30.8)	34.7 (34.4)
Science	30.5 (30.4)	33.3 (33.1)

There were 239 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- Standards seen in lessons and students' work during the inspection are reflected in national test results and teacher assessments for 14 year olds. In 2002, the overall performance in national tests for 14 year olds in English, mathematics and science was below the national average, although well above that for similar schools. Progress since 11 years of age although good in English and mathematics was unsatisfactory in science. Provisional results for 2003 show improvement in mathematics and English with results close to national averages.
- In other subjects teacher assessments indicate standards in line with those reported nationally in 2002 and provisionally in 2003. The exceptions are information and communication technology where they are significantly below national averages, and physical education in 2003 and modern foreign languages in 2002 where they are below national averages.

Key Stage 4

- Achievement is good throughout Years 10 and 11. Girls build well on the standards achieved by the end of Year 9 in most subjects. Attitudes towards work improve further and they take full advantage of the good teaching they receive. Standards and achievement are very good in music, and good in drama, design and technology and the personal, social, health and religious education programme. For the core subjects, standards in mathematics are close to national averages, because the girls in the top sets are on course to achieve the higher GCSE A*-C grades. This is not so in English and science and lowers the overall standards achieved. Standards are satisfactory in all other subjects, except information and communication technology and French where they are below national expectations. In information and communication technology the reasons are as for Key Stage 3. The teaching in French is still not good enough to ensure the best standards.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	46.(42)	50 (48)
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	96 (95)	91(91)
Percentage of students gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	100 (99)	96 (96)
Average point score per student (best eight subjects)	36.3 (*)	34.2 (*)

*There were 232 students in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year. * indicates not available.*

- The good achievement that students make throughout Years 10 and 11 is reflected in their overall GCSE performance. In 2002, overall performance at GCSE was in line with that nationally and represents much better progress than that made by students in similar schools. The proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE passes was well above the national average for girls. This reflects the good attendance figures, low exclusion rates and positive attitudes towards learning of students in these years. Provisional results for 2003 also reflect this good performance. In 2002 although the proportion of students gaining five or more of the higher A*-C grades was equivalent to that nationally and well above that of similar schools, it was below the national average for girls. Provisional figures for 2003 are similar and represent good achievement for a group of students of slightly lower ability.

8. In 2002 overall performance in English, mathematics and science was equivalent to that nationally and represented good progress. However, although still representing good progress overall results at the higher A*-C grades in English and science were below national averages, in spite of a good number of A/A* grades in science. In mathematics the proportion of A*-C grades was close to national averages. In 2003 the results at the A*-C level in mathematics and science were not as high but still represent good progress. Girls are on course to improve results in these subjects this year.
9. For other subjects students do particularly well in drama, design and technology, music and Bengali. They did well in Spanish and science in 2002 and history in 2003. They do least well in geography and French.

Performance of different groups of students

10. Although there are some variations from year to year there are no significant differences between the examination results of the main ethnic groups. Overall, Indian girls do best and white and Black Caribbean girls do least well. In lessons no significant differences were observed between the progress of the different ethnic groups who worked well together. Girls eligible for free school meals, refugees, travellers, and children in care achieve well and often better than similar students in other Newham schools. The school's self-evaluation identifies clearly any differences in performance and action to address any concerns is put into place.
11. Students with special educational needs do well and most gain 5 or more GCSE passes, a good result. The 10 per cent of students identified as gifted and talented achieve GCSE and national test results at 14 years of age at their expected higher grades. An outstanding proportion of the top GCSE A/A* grades was achieved in drama in 2003 and results in music were also very good. Students taking GCSE statistics as an extra-curricular activity gained a very high proportion of A*-C grades. Although students for whom English is an additional language do as well as other students overall, the smaller proportion at the early stages of learning English sometimes underachieve. The specialist learning support teachers work mainly with students at the earliest stages of English, but the time available is limited.

Monitoring of performance and key skills

12. Whole school tracking of students' progress is detailed and informative. Girls are set clear targets and support programmes are put in place for those who are identified as underachieving. However, such rich data is not yet used fully by all subject areas to inform planning, to match work to students' learning needs and to set student learning targets in order to ensure the best possible progress for all students. The school's targets are ambitious and although exceeded for the proportion of girls gaining five or more GCSE passes they have yet to be achieved for five or more GCSE A*-C grades.
13. Inspection evidence shows that teaching does not always extend the students' ability to express more complex ideas orally and then subsequently in their writing. These skills are required for the highest GCSE grades. Where teachers' questioning closely probes students' understanding, such as in history, or teachers use a range of teaching styles that demonstrates clearly what is expected, such as in drama, higher standards are achieved. Students' competence in mathematics enables them to make satisfactory progress in other curriculum areas with some good use of data-handling developing. Skills in information and communication technology are not yet high enough to ensure students use them as effectively as possible in all subject areas.

Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The attitudes and values students hold are **very good**, as is their social, moral and cultural development. Their behaviour is **good** overall. Students' personal development, and relationships within the school community are **very good**. Attendance is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students are enthusiastic and show interest in and determination to work hard at their lessons.
- Very good procedures to encourage and monitor attendance have resulted in attendance above the national average.
- The school's high expectations promote good student behaviour.
- Opportunities and procedures for students' personal development are very good.
- Relationships between all members of the school community are very good and result in cultural harmony.

Commentary

14. Students are very proud of their school and keen that others should recognise its qualities. A parent volunteered 'racial harmony' as a good example, and both students and inspectors agree. The school has a friendly, welcoming yet purposeful atmosphere and a love of learning is evident. Cultural diversity is celebrated and relationships amongst all are very good.
15. Students arrive promptly in the mornings and their attendance is good. During the inspection week, attendance in Years 10 and 11 was amongst the highest in the school, and indicates students sustain interest in school as they get older. This is not always the national picture. The electronic system for morning, afternoon and lesson registration is very effective. Absences are followed up promptly and the few latecomers sign in as they arrive. Telephone calls to parents are rarely needed. A few parents expressed concern that if they had not reported their daughter absent no immediate phone call was made.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2001-2002 (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	4.5	School data :	2.6
National data:	7.8	National data:	1.2

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

16. Behaviour is good overall throughout the school. This improves as students get older and is very good in most lessons. Marks, merits and certificates are all eagerly sought and valued. The announcements of 'class of the week' for achievement and best attendance are greeted with a quiet "yessss!" by the winners at their weekly year assembly. Coming as they do from many different backgrounds, students are well aware of different religions, cultures and traditions. They respect and value others' views and beliefs. Bullying and harassing behaviour are not tolerated and none was seen during the inspection. Very effective sanctions support those whose behaviour falls below the expected level. Attending the learning support unit significantly helps students who have difficulties in settling in class. Internal exclusion is used well for other students. There have been only two permanent exclusions in the past 12 months, below average for the size of school.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of students

Exclusions in the last school year 2002-2003

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of students on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	164	4	0
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other White background	52	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	5	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	27	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	189	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	139	11	1
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	200	2	1
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	26	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	137	1	1
Black or Black British – African	131	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	73	0	0
Chinese	5	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	9	0	0

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

17. Students are interested in learning and eager to achieve well. They try very hard to live up to the school's high expectations. The lunchtime study club is regularly used by many. Assemblies, such as the well-produced and enjoyable one on 'Learning', seen during the inspection, reinforce this aim. Personal, social, health and religious education lessons promote mature discussion on such issues as a school charter for refugees. Students discuss issues openly whilst sensitive to individual circumstances. Students' spiritual awareness is good and geography, history, mathematics, music, and personal, social, health and religious education lessons contribute well to this aspect of their education. The girls understand that they have a responsibility and duty to the community as a whole. They have chosen a local hospice for their charity. Visitors and visits increase their knowledge of the world outside Sarah Bonnell, alert them to possible difficulties and how best to deal with these. Confidence, self-reliance and responsible attitudes develop and students are well prepared for life in Britain's multi-cultural society. They have a strong sense of justice and their moral, social and cultural development is very good.
18. Students' personal development is very good because they have many opportunities to take responsibility for themselves and others. They like this and carry their responsibilities out very well. Class friends help new arrivals and trained peer supporters always offer assistance. Year 8 students take it in turns to sit in the reception area ready to assist any member of staff or visitor to the school. The school works very well as a self-regulating society: Junior and senior stewards in Years 9 and 11 wear their arm bands with pride and ensure rules are kept and movement around the school is orderly. Elected class and school council representatives deal with issues raised by their year groups. They are particularly proud of improvements to the toilets as a result of their representations. The head girl, two deputies and four assistant head girls meet regularly with the headteacher and act as a very effective bridge between staff and

students. Students also participate in interviews for new staff and impress governors with the quality of their questioning and views.

19. All students, whatever their background, are fully involved in the life and work of the school, co-operate well with others and are keen to do as well as they can. They are proud of their school and feel supported and encouraged to reach their full potential.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching is good and the curriculum meets well the interests of the different cultural groups and the learning needs of students. Extra-curricular activities are a strength of the school's work. The support, care and guidance of students are good. Parents and students are happy with the work of the school overall. However some parents feel they do not get enough feedback about their daughter's progress from her subject teachers.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **good overall**. It is **better for GCSE students** in Years 10-11 than for younger students in Years 7 to 9. **The girls' very positive attitudes to work** play a significant part in the good progress they make. The school has worked hard through its clear monitoring programme to improve the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection. Most subject areas have sustained or improved the good quality seen at the last inspection. Teaching shows a **consistency of approach** that is in line with the school's clear expectations.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching for students in Years 10 and 11 is good and sometimes very good.
- The students want to do well, work well together and this supports good learning in the classroom.
- Teachers structure lessons well so that new learning takes place.
- Teachers have a good knowledge of their subject and in the best lessons enthuse and interest students to a high level.
- Relationships in the classroom are very good and create a good learning environment.
- Opportunities to extend students' reading, writing and speaking and listening skills are sometimes missed, especially in Years 10 and 11.
- In the small number of lessons in Years 7 to 9 where teaching and learning are unsatisfactory, teachers do not manage students' behaviour well.
- Class teachers do not work closely enough with learning support staff.

Commentary

20. Teaching and learning are good overall. Although 10 per cent of the teaching observed was unsatisfactory, this overall judgement was also based on discussions with students and teachers and the scrutiny of students' work. This evidence shows good teaching and learning over time.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 106 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	21 (20%)	39 (37%)	35 (33%)	11 (10%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

21. Teaching is good in Years 10 and 11 and satisfactory in Years 7 to 9. Learning is good in all years because students settle quickly to work in most lessons, take full advantage of the teacher's good knowledge and skills and conscientiously undertake both classwork and

homework. In a few lessons in Years 7 to 9 students do not behave well because lessons are not sufficiently well delivered. Students lose interest and teachers do not obtain the very good standards of behaviour seen in most lessons throughout the school.

22. Good teaching was most evident in mathematics, English in Years 7 to 9, art, drama, design and technology, including child development and family, geography, history, music and the personal, social, health and religious education programme. In French the students' learning is unsatisfactory because not all teachers' expectations of work and behaviour are high enough. In other subjects teaching is satisfactory and often good. Where teaching is best, for example in drama and child development and family, the teachers' strategies ensure that all students are well involved in the lesson and can understand what they need to do. This is through the good use of language, visual resources and demonstration that takes into account particularly the needs of girls at the early stages of learning English or who have learning difficulties.
23. In many lessons teachers take full advantage of the very good relationships that exist between students from all ethnic groups. They use group and pair work effectively to extend students' learning through discussion and project work. This works effectively in personal, social, health and religious education lessons where such opportunities are well planned and the outcomes move all students' learning forward. In a Year 11 lesson on developing a charter for refugee students joining the school the range of suggestions from different working groups were drawn together well by the teacher. This gave all students a firm basis for their individual homework task. Homework is set regularly and makes a good contribution to students' learning. Very often it is set during the lesson rather than at the end and this ensures students have it clearly written down and know what is expected.
24. The National Strategy for students in Years 7 to 9 has been well implemented and the teaching approaches have helped to raise standards in English and mathematics and to some extent science for these students in recent years. Although learning is good overall for students in Years 10 and 11, it is not yet good enough to increase further the numbers of students gaining the higher GCSE A*-C grades. Teachers miss opportunities to develop students' speaking and listening skills, such that they are able to express clearly and effectively more complex ideas. This would deepen their understanding of a topic and help them to show this in their written work. For example, where teaching was least effective in Years 10 and 11 students answered factual questions satisfactorily but the teachers did not expect or prompt students to expand on their ideas further. Discussion with students indicated they were well able to do this. Good practice was seen in history but not always in English or geography.
25. Activities in most lessons meet the needs of students with special educational needs or English as an additional language. However, in science for younger students in Years 7 to 9 teachers do not always make sure work meets the needs of the least able students in the class and they often do not make enough progress. When present in lessons, learning support teachers and teaching assistants generally provide satisfactory support for the students with whom they are working. They have very good relationships with them. Their contribution, however, is not as effective as it could be. Subject teachers do not plan sufficiently with learning support staff so that they can make the best use of their skills. Teaching and learning in the few withdrawal sessions seen for students with learning difficulties was not always effective. In these instances the purpose of a session was not always clear and consequently teaching had little impact on the students' learning.
26. Overall the use of information about students' previous learning to plan lessons is satisfactory. The school has good information on individual students' attainment and individual learning needs, which is shared with all teachers. Ongoing monitoring of students' progress is good in art, design and technology, mathematics, and music. In other subject areas it is satisfactory. Students know how well they are doing but feedback in students' books sometimes provides little information on how they can improve.

27. Improvement in teaching and learning since the last inspection has been satisfactory. There have been improvements in the teaching of religious education and mathematics and of English for 11 to 14 year olds. However, although teaching has improved overall the teaching in French has not significantly improved.

The curriculum

Overall the range of learning opportunities in this ethnically diverse school meet well the students' different learning, cultural and personal needs. The curriculum meets statutory requirements. There are sufficient teachers, support staff and resources to ensure its delivery. The accommodation, both new and old, is adequate for the demands of the curriculum.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The wide range of European and community language courses on offer match the diverse cultural character of the school.
 - The wide range of extra-curricular activities is a strength of the school.
 - Support for learning outside the school day is very good.
 - Accommodation for physical education is inadequate and hinders the achievement of the best possible standards.
 - The organisation of learning support, whilst currently supporting students satisfactorily, is not as effective as it could be.
 - The range of books in the school library needs updating.
 - There is no provision for a daily act of collective worship.
28. The curriculum for Years 7 to 9 gives students a good range of experiences with the full range of national curriculum subjects on offer. In Years 10 and 11 all students study a core curriculum plus two options, which results in a good balance. A distinctive feature of the curriculum is the provision for modern foreign languages, which is wide and covers both European and community languages. This helped the school obtain language college status in September 2003. Students who speak a foreign language, other than those taught, have the opportunity to take it at GCSE. However, this is a much smaller number than one would expect in this ethnically diverse school as many students do not read and write their first language to the required level.
29. The school now provides adequate time for information and communication technology and in Year 9 students begin their GNVQ studies. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The time allocation for information and communication technology in Years 10 and 11 is around half of that recommended but extra time is provided for students at lunchtime and after school and they make good use of this. Provision in religious education has also improved since the last inspection and now meets statutory requirements because of the increased time allocation and the introduction of the GCSE short course in Years 10 and 11. Assemblies are good and well matched to the diverse cultural and religious profile of the school, but students do not have access to collective worship on a daily basis.
30. The school has introduced several courses to meet the students' specific learning needs: a weekly literacy session in Year 7 to raise students' reading and writing skills, a study skills course in Year 11 to help students plan and organise their GCSE work and an accredited life skills course for those students who find the full GCSE course too demanding. All are well taught and successfully meet students' learning needs.
31. The government's National Strategy for 11 to 14 year olds has been implemented very effectively in English and mathematics and is raising standards. In science the strategy is beginning to improve the quality of teaching and student progress. Across other subjects the development of students' literacy and numeracy skills and the use of national guidance on the planning and delivery of lessons varies. Attention to these aspects of the curriculum ranges from very good to occasionally unsatisfactory but is judged to be satisfactory overall.

Strengths in the best lessons are the emphasis placed on the explanation of technical language and the good reference to key-words displayed on the board.

32. The school makes sound provision for students newly arrived in the United Kingdom and provides alternative courses if needed, sometimes through the local authority. Learning support in lessons for students with English as an additional language, although sound, is limited. The best practice occurs when the learning support teacher works with departments to develop all teachers' skills. This is an efficient use of the specialist teacher's time.
33. The provision for students with special educational needs including those with a specific statement of need is satisfactory. Individual education plans are clear and focus on targets that can be worked towards across a range of subjects. They provide good strategies for teachers to support students. A newly appointed co-ordinator has identified areas for improvement. Learning support teachers rarely take a leading role in the lessons they support and as a consequence their skills are not used as well as they could be.
34. Extension of the school curriculum through extra-curricular activities is very good and a strength of the school. These activities broaden students' experiences, extend the most able and support preparation for examinations. A rich and varied programme of experiences exists in almost every subject area. Students respond enthusiastically to this provision and participation rates are good. In physical education there is a very good and extensive range of activities from competitive inter-school competition, to Bhangra dance in the community. The Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme is actively supported. A second modern foreign language is available for students as part of the school's specialist language status. Revision clubs, special groups for students with special educational needs and from different ethnic groups exist in most subjects and are often organised and run by the students themselves.
35. The school provides well for the needs of students whom it has identified as gifted or talented. For example, the school is very successful in gaining funding for arts initiatives that involve students in specific projects with artists, performing musicians and composers from within and beyond the local community. A wide range of music clubs is available. Although they attract a modest uptake, the strength of the provision lies within the special projects, which provide a rich diversity of experience. The school undertakes regular productions that involve many students. Higher attaining students in Year 10 and 11 take GCSE statistics after school. This is well attended with a 100 per cent pass rate.

Example of outstanding practice

A strength and focus of the extra-curricular provision in music is in the involvement of professional musicians and artists from within and beyond the local community in specific projects.

The school has been proactive in seeking funding for a range of activities that include work with members of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, a professional brass player, and musicians who represent the rich diversity of cultures of the area. These activities provide enrichment for all students involved, and in addition, challenge the talented, and reach out to students from other local schools.

In addition to the huge musical benefits for students, such activities, serve to break down traditional stereotypes and provide experiences, which draw together students in activities that transcend and cross cultural barriers in a way that promotes harmony and understanding, and collaborative working.

A film has been made by the school, in collaboration with an undergraduate from the local university. This celebrates the activities that have taken place over the past 12 months. The title of the film, "Across Divides" captures the essence of the strength of music in the school. Students speak and write articulately about the power of music to captivate and feed the soul.

In this way, the school capitalises on the value of music as a universal means of communication. This adds significantly to the social and cultural development of students and provides them with experiences that are truly spiritual, inculcating a love of the art, which spills over into an enthusiasm to learn.

36. Accommodation is satisfactory overall. The school works hard to improve the older Victorian parts of the school and to fund new building within tight budget constraints. The new library area is used well throughout the school day and gives access to computers out of school

hours for students and the community. Books are efficiently and attractively displayed. The fiction stock, however, has a large number of dated and unappealing books and the stock for less confident readers is inadequate. The ethnic diversity of the school population and its community is not strongly reflected in the range of texts available in the library. Accommodation for physical education is unsatisfactory because the poor playground conditions and inadequate gymnasium limit girls' performance. Below average time and too few full-time teachers also hinder further improvement in standards for this subject.

37. The school is relatively well staffed although budget constraints have delayed the permanent replacement of a special needs teacher. Staff turnover has been relatively low compared with that in many inner city schools and there is a good balance of experienced teachers and those new to the school and the profession. Difficulties in appointing and staffing modern foreign languages and special education needs have slowed progress in these subject areas.

Care, guidance and support

Teachers know students well and the overall care support and guidance provided is good. The very good relationships that exist in the school community ensure any concerns are identified and dealt with effectively, although procedures for students' care, welfare, health and safety in some instances are no more than satisfactory. **Good systems** are in place to track students' academic and personal progress and to provide any additional support needed. Students' views on the work of the school are **very much valued** and they have many opportunities to influence the work of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good relationships that exist within the school community give all students someone to turn to if they need help.
- The learning support unit provides very good support for students who have difficulty in settling to work in class.
- The school provides very good opportunities for students to participate in the work of the school.
- Effective systems monitor students' academic and personal progress on a regular basis.
- Canteen facilities at lunchtime are not adequate for the number of girls wishing to take lunch.
- Form time is not used well by all staff to support students' learning and achievement.

Commentary

38. The school takes the care, welfare, health and safety of all in school very seriously. Because of the very good relationships that exist between all members of the school community, students always have an adult to turn to for advice and/or support whatever their difficulties. Health and safety are high priorities and procedures are satisfactory. Risk assessments are carried out and security is reviewed regularly. The decision that all students remain on site during lunch-time, whilst popular with parents, is causing some difficulties. In spite of good efforts by the school, canteen facilities are inadequate for the increased numbers. Some students do not manage to get any food before this break finishes or have anywhere suitable to eat it. Personnel trained in first aid are always on site and practice is good. Satisfactory child protection guidelines are in place, and planned training to update staff will take place before the end of this term.
39. Very good care and support by adults and other students ensure students have confidence that any concerns will be dealt with effectively. Because of good links and very good induction procedures with local primary schools students settle quickly into their new school. Tutor groups meet morning and afternoon for registration but these sessions do not provide all students with activities to support and encourage their learning and personal development. Students also indicate they tend to turn to the heads of year rather than their form tutors if they need help of any kind. Class representatives, stewards and members of the school council are a strong feature of the school's work and are approachable and ready to assist any girl who needs support.

40. Procedures to track students' progress and to provide additional support if they are underachieving are good. Regular whole school assessments include current performance matched against target grades and information on behaviour and attitudes. Individual half-yearly interviews with a member of staff help each student to review her progress and set targets for improvement. Where needed students are referred to learning mentors who provide good support. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 has enough flexibility to support students who find their studies difficult, for example the accredited life skills course. Year 11 students have a weekly session to develop their study skills and help with the organisation of coursework. Year 7 students have a weekly literacy lesson to improve reading and writing skills. Many staff run extra courses and clubs after school and at weekends to support students before examinations.
41. Procedures to help students newly arrived in the United Kingdom are good. Information on their educational background and classroom needs are efficiently passed on to subject staff. This helps teachers to match work to the needs of most English as an additional language learners. Although the school has only a very small number of students of Traveller heritage it knows the families well and tracks each student's progress with interest and care. One GCSE student spoke proudly of her progress and achievements in school, her choices for GCSE and future goals.
42. Girls with special educational needs are satisfactorily supported and most achieve well by the time they are 16 years of age. The learning support unit has a very positive impact on the learning attitudes of students taking its programme. Feedback from students confirmed the long lasting impact of the programme on improved behaviour, co-operation and communication skills. This reflects the commitment, and vision of the staff and manager.
43. Students receive sound guidance and advice about their careers. With the advent of the re-sited careers office and library, now networked, students can research on their own or take friendly advice. The local education authority careers adviser and Connexions agency are well used and girls are well prepared for interviews.
44. The school values the views and ideas of the students and has comprehensive procedures to obtain these. Questionnaires, surveys and the school council are well used for this. Students on the voluntary school self-evaluation group conduct surveys and consult on the school improvement plan. They analyse returns and report back to staff and students making the task a worthwhile activity. Senior staff and governors value the contribution of girls involved in interviewing for new teachers.

Partnerships with parents, other schools and the community

The school **works well** with parents and has some **very good links** with the community. The building is **used** well as a community resource. Liaison and links with other local schools and colleges are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are generally pleased at the good progress their daughters make and the care they receive from the school.
- The school actively seeks to develop links with the local community.
- Good links are in place with other schools and colleges.
- Reports for parents on their daughter's progress are not as helpful as they could be.

Commentary

45. The school has established an effective partnership with parents and is always seeking to improve this. Parents are very proud their daughters attend this popular, over-subscribed school and are generally pleased with the relationships they enjoy with staff. They share the

school's aims and ambitions for their daughters, and, those who can help them with work at home. A few parents state they find it difficult to contact the school, but most are happy with the procedures and feel comfortable to approach the school with questions or concerns.

46. Most parents feel they are kept well informed of their daughter's needs and progress. Information for parents is satisfactory. They receive reports on their daughters' progress once a term and can contact the heads of year if they have concerns. Parents' contributions on individual education plans for students with special educational needs, and through informal communication with staff, are good. Whilst reports meet statutory requirements and provide useful information for parents they lack written comments from individual subject teachers. Inspectors did not consider them sufficiently helpful for parents. Parents value the new academic review days, where they and their daughter meet with a member of staff to discuss progress and set targets. Attendance is good. Some parents would also like to speak to staff who teach their daughters for more specific information. Translators are provided if necessary for meetings with parents and when needed for understanding documents, as few documents are printed in languages other than English. Parents are regularly consulted on a variety of subjects through questionnaires and the school tries hard to involve them in their daughters' education. Despite encouragement, there is no parent teacher association but parents support fund-raising events and enjoy others, such as school performances, to which they are invited.
47. The school's links with the local community, its input to school life, and the contribution the school makes to the local area are very good. It has a clear vision for the role of the school in the community as Stratford develops through its improving communication links to the City and the Eurostar link to Europe. The newly appointed community liaison officer works alongside the school bursar to develop links with local organisations, clubs and voluntary groups. The aim is for the school to be a valued resource in the community beyond the school day. An attractive animated presentation and colour newsletter have been produced to promote the school, demonstrating the new manager's creativity, vision and commitment to the role. All bookings are subject to a written contract to ensure all activities are in harmony with the school's values and ethos. They comply with the school's race equality policy.
48. The school makes good use of community groups to enhance students' personal development, educational experiences, and achievement. There are frequent opportunities for students in all year groups to become involved in community projects. The work of the school youth worker is very good and she particularly encourages students to get involved in local affairs and has formed a youth organisation committee to promote this. Students have benefited from opportunities to take part in the local youth parliament and Newham Festival and also the Stratford community forum held at the school. Few local residents are involved in the curriculum but local resources are well used for educational visits. The local education-business partnership is currently trialling tele/e-mentoring for some older students. The school is keen to develop further links for visiting speakers or groups during the school day.
49. The school has good links with local schools and colleges of further education. These ensure an easy induction for new arrivals and good opportunities and advice for students to make informed choices about their future. Some of these links are the result of the school being a Beacon school. Links with primary schools have developed through the National Strategy for primary schools and younger secondary children. Most girls go on to further education. As a specialist language college the school will be developing the current links with other schools and colleges further.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Sarah Bonnell is an **effective and successful** school where girls **achieve well**. Leadership and management are **good** and priorities for future developments are visionary and reflect the school's aims. The school is an orderly environment in which all ethnic groups work well together. **Expectations are high** and staff work enthusiastically to achieve them. Although the governing

body has several strong features, Ofsted criteria mean it must be judged unsatisfactory, because it does not ensure the provision of a daily act of collective worship.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher and all her staff have a very clear and shared vision for the school based on the school's motto 'learning for life'.
- The leadership of the headteacher and her senior team ensure very good relationships between all members of the school community whatever their background, culture, religion or ethnic group and these are evident in all aspects of the school's work.
- The school's structures for reviewing the effectiveness of its work are good and inform well its future priorities.
- Management of the school's work is good and ensures an orderly learning environment.
- Governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses well.
- Governors do not ensure the school has a daily act of collective worship.
- Financial management is very good and within financial constraints supports well the school's priorities.
- Staffing difficulties have continued to slow improvements in French since the last inspection.
- Although provision is satisfactory for students with special educational needs and English as an additional language, there is still no consistent whole-school approach to these areas of work.
- Not all form tutors are effective.

Commentary

50. The commitment to provide high quality education for girls is central to the work of the school. Girls come from a wide range of ethnic, cultural and religious groups in one of the most deprived London boroughs. Many enter the school with below average standards and with English not their first language. By the time they leave school at 16 years of age standards are equivalent to those nationally and are much better than those in schools in similar circumstances. The girls are mature and sensible and have a very good understanding of the multi-cultural society in which they live. A high number continue with their education. Relationships between the girls themselves and their teachers are very good indeed and the school is a happy and orderly place in which to learn.
51. The governing body is committed and representative of the local community. A significant number of parents show their commitment to the school by being members of the governing body. Governors clearly know the strengths and weaknesses of the school and the chair of governors and the chairs of its committees are well informed of the school's work. The governors work well with the staff of the school who frequently attend governor meetings to report on their work and answer questions. Developing subject links are helping governors to be more rigorous in judging the effectiveness of new initiatives and spending. The governors have their own clear action plan to improve their knowledge and understanding of the work of the school. They recognise that whilst they review policy and contribute to the school improvement plan they do not take a large enough role in the initial discussions. The process is to change this year. Although assemblies provide a good spiritual experience for students, the governing body does not ensure the school holds a daily act of collective worship for all students. Because it is not meeting this statutory requirement, and in spite of its strengths, the work of the governing body has to be judged unsatisfactory by Ofsted criteria.
52. Leadership and management throughout the school are good overall. The leadership provided by the headteacher and the senior management team is particularly good. A major strength is the continuing drive for improvement. Priorities are clear and supported through training and funding. New national initiatives are researched and followed through and add significantly to the quality of education provided for students. Throughout the school, staff share common aims and their commitment is shown in the good quality and range of extra-curricular activities staff willingly undertake for students and in the developing community provision. Equality of opportunity underpins all decisions and every girl is valued highly. In spite of continuing areas for development in how students with special educational needs and English as an additional

language can be best supported, all students receive a good quality education that takes into account their cultural, personal and learning needs.

53. Management is good and the well-planned regular review of the school's work, that includes monitoring and evaluation of students' performance and teaching and learning, informs future priorities. Ambitious targets are set that are well monitored. Girls and staff have a common understanding of rules and procedures, and girls, very politely, reminded inspectors of rules for going up and down the staircases.
54. As part of its commitment to improvement the school identifies appropriate training opportunities for staff through the regular review of each teacher's work and subject area's needs. New teachers and supply teachers are well supported and staff turnover is lower and recruitment easier than found in most inner city schools. Financial management is very good. The school compares its spending on different areas with both local schools and similar schools nationally. The views of parents and students are regularly sought on new procedures such as the changes to parents' meetings through the introduction of the academic review days.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	5,496,215
Total expenditure	5,159,118
Expenditure per student	4,357

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	398,059
Balance carried forward to the next	60,962

55. Leadership and management are very good in design and technology and good in mathematics, history, music, art, drama, and personal, social, health and religious education. For heads of year and other subject areas they are satisfactory with strengths clearly outweighing any weaknesses. The use of information on student performance and progress to inform teaching and learning such that all needs are met is an area for further development in many subject areas. A year ago the school moved to one person having oversight of a whole year group rather than a house structure where a member of staff had overall responsibility for groups of students in different age groups. The new role is developing well but the role of form tutors within this is not yet as effective as it could be.
56. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Standards have improved for 11 to 14 year olds and the school's very good achievements at GCSE have been maintained. In 2002 the school received the government's achievement award for its GCSE results. It became a Beacon School in 1999 because of its good practice. The school has achieved language college status. The school now meets statutory requirements for the teaching of religious education and provision in this area is now good. Within financial constraints accommodation has improved, mostly due to the school's own efforts in providing the money. A new library area is used well throughout the day and after school. In physical education, although changing room facilities have improved, the school, in spite of strenuous efforts such as a lottery money bid, has been unable to improve the playground surface or develop a larger sports hall because of insufficient money. This lowers the standards students are able to achieve in physical education. The provision of activities for the community is developing very well. The deployment of learning support teachers is now co-ordinated by one person and is better. Changes in the leadership of the school's work with students with special educational needs and English as an additional language have hindered the development of a strategic view of how best to provide for these students' needs. Staffing difficulties have slowed improvements in modern foreign languages, especially French, where provision remains unsatisfactory. However, given the continued good achievement of students and the very positive attitudes towards learning the students have at 16 years of age, it is judged the school continues to give good value for money.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

ENGLISH

Provision for English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement in Years 7 to 9 is good.
- Students have positive attitudes to English and behave well.
- Relationships are good.
- Some teaching is insufficiently challenging, particularly in Years 10 and 11.
- Management is good.
- Not enough use is made of information and communication technology to develop English skills.
- Opportunities for students to develop higher order skills in spoken language require strengthening.

Commentary

57. Standards for 11 to 14 year olds are in line with national expectations. In 2002 the percentage of students gaining the expected level in national tests for 14 year olds was below the national average, but standards in lessons and provisional results for 2003 indicate that standards are now broadly in line with the national average. Standards for older GCSE students are below national expectations overall. Nearly all students entered for GCSE English in 2002 passed and all passed English Literature, but the proportion of students achieving the highest A*-C grades is below that nationally. Recent results and standards in lessons indicate that standards are rising, but they have yet to reach the school's ambitious targets.
58. Achievement is good in Years 7 to 9 and is satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Exam results are good overall in comparison to similar schools. Students of all abilities make at least satisfactory progress although some more able students have the potential to achieve more. Of the ethnic groups Indian girls do best and White and Black Caribbean girls do least well, although differences in performance are not significantly great.
59. In lessons students are keen to participate, to express views and listen to others and this makes a significant contribution to the standards they achieve. The different ethnic groups work well together in pairs or small groups. The presentation of written work in books is generally good and shows the pride most students have in their work. Some lack skills in more extended uses of spoken language and need more clearly structured activities, which allow them to develop greater range and confidence. By the end of Year 11 more able students are able to respond with insight to more complex texts. A class studying *Jane Eyre* explored how the novel challenges conventional attitudes, leading one student to remark, 'I had no idea how modern Charlotte Bronte's views were'. Good teaching develops students' understanding of, and ability to respond to, a broad range of writing, from poetry to letters from the opinion page of a newspaper. In their writing students show a good understanding of different writing forms.
60. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. It is good for students in Years 7 to 9. In all but a few lessons seen teaching was at least satisfactory, and in nearly a half it was good or better. In the best lessons the learning objectives are clear, explained well to students and returned to at the end of the lesson to check understanding. The teacher matches activities closely to the objectives and takes account of good assessment information about students to make sound provision for their different learning needs. Homework is used effectively to extend and consolidate learning, and is set at a suitable point during the lesson that ensures all students are clear what to do. Relationships are very good and students enjoy the subject.

61. Where teaching is less effective, planning and the delivery of the lesson are not well matched to students' learning needs. Teachers' questioning of students does not sufficiently probe or develop their understanding of new ideas, particularly in GCSE groups. Marking of written work does not provide enough guidance to students about how they can improve their writing. Specialist support for students at the early stages of learning English is limited. However not all teachers make sufficient use of strategies to address the learning needs of these students and others for whom English is not their first language.
62. The leadership of the department is satisfactory. The learning area co-ordinator has a clear vision for the subject focused on high achievement for all students. As yet strategies for improvement have not yet sufficiently raised attainment at GCSE. Management of the department is good. Some very good in-house materials provide a broad basis for the reading of all students, but the cultural range of texts is limited beyond these anthologies. The department makes a positive contribution to the social and moral development of students, through both the content of the curriculum and through learning activities in lessons. Schemes of work identify the use of information and communication technology in English but opportunities to use computers in the subject are limited.
63. Although there has been no significant increase in performance in national tests and examinations since the previous inspection, the recent results in national tests for 14 year olds and the effective implementation of key initiatives from the National Strategy for English for 11 to 14 year olds indicate that satisfactory progress has been made. The planning and resourcing of the curriculum has been greatly strengthened. This has been achieved in a context of very significant staff turnover in English.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

64. Standards in literacy (reading and writing) overall are close to national expectations throughout the school. However, many of the students lack the higher order skills in speaking and listening (oracy), and in reading and writing, whether in English or their first language, that will enable them to achieve higher standards throughout the curriculum. Students' writing is generally well presented, and spelling, punctuation and basic grammar are sound. A number of students, including those who are more able and those who are bilingual, show in their writing an insecurity with more specialised written language styles, many of which are specific to particular subject disciplines: for example reviewing a performance in drama or proposing a hypothesis in science. Most students are keen to express and discuss ideas, although a significant number lack confidence and assurance in doing so. Many students read confidently and with understanding, and the library, located in new accommodation, is very well used.
65. The school has made good progress in developing a coherent approach to students' literacy in all areas of the curriculum. By focusing on developing students' knowledge and understanding of keywords and different writing styles in other subject areas, students' ability to use language for learning has been strengthened. Developments have been led by the school's literacy co-ordinator, who is also the curriculum leader for English, but this programme is not systematically promoted by a designated team drawn from a range of subject areas. Literacy is a priority in the school improvement plan, and is a focus in the recently revised lesson observation framework. There are examples of effective and deliberate teaching of oracy and literacy in several curriculum areas, such as art, history, mathematics, drama, physical education and religious education, through the clear use of technical language and well-structured discussion and writing sessions. Despite these positive steps the ability of students to use language for learning requires further development in order to address the language demands of GCSE coursework and examinations, and to improve performance at the higher grades.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

The focus was on French, German and Spanish. Italian and the community languages (Urdu, Bengali and Arabic) were sampled.

Provision in modern foreign languages is **satisfactory** overall. It is satisfactory in German, Spanish, Italian, and in the community languages but unsatisfactory in French.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards and achievement are unsatisfactory in French.
 - In summer 2003 girls achieved very good GCSE results in Bengali.
 - The best teaching is planned well and uses a wide range of learning activities that interest and support students' learning.
 - Where learning is unsatisfactory, lessons are not planned well and as a result students do not listen or behave well.
 - The language college development plan shows vision and clarity, but is still only in the early stages of development.
 - Provision and teamwork are improving under the leadership of the current learning manager.
 - There are inconsistencies in the assessment and marking of work across the different languages taught.
66. In German the students' achievement is satisfactory overall. For 14 year olds standards are below national expectations and for 16 year olds in line with national expectations. Teaching is satisfactory. Most students work enthusiastically and behave well in lessons. Their learning benefits from the teacher's frequent use of German and the variety of sound learning activities used. Occasionally students do not remain on task throughout the lesson and so do not make the best possible progress.
67. In Spanish students also achieve satisfactorily overall. Standards for 14 year olds are below those expected nationally and for GCSE groups in line with national expectations. Teaching is satisfactory overall and ranged from unsatisfactory to good in the lessons seen. Where teaching is good, lesson objectives and tasks are explained clearly, the lesson has pace and variety and Spanish is used and understood throughout. Tasks are matched to students' individual learning needs and students are clear about and meet the teacher's expectations regarding behaviour. Where teaching is less effective, particularly in Years 8 and 9, students are not clear about the tasks they are set, high attainers are not challenged and there is constant distraction because many students lose concentration and chat with each other, despite the teacher's efforts. In addition, marking of written work is not supportive of understanding and progress.
68. In French the students' achievement is unsatisfactory overall, despite some good teaching. Standards reached by 14 year olds and 16 year olds are below nationally expected levels. Teaching is unsatisfactory overall. Where teaching is good the teacher communicates the lesson's objectives clearly and enables all students to carry out the tasks set, by providing different levels of support according to learning needs. Students are enthusiastic, behave well and focus on the work in hand throughout. The target language is used appropriately and is understood by the students, and the lesson has pace and variety. Good practice to meet individual learning needs was seen in a Year 11 lesson, where materials were adapted for students with special educational needs. Higher attaining students worked orally with the French assistant. Where teaching is unsatisfactory the teacher does not explain tasks clearly and constantly has to try to manage poor behaviour. Students are neither sufficiently challenged nor supported. As a result students' knowledge is not secure and they do not progress sufficiently.
69. Provision in the three community languages offered – Arabic, Bengali and Urdu – is satisfactory overall. Achievement is good, given that, although many of the girls taking courses in Bengali and Urdu speak these languages at home, experience of reading and writing them

is uncommon. Some do not speak the standard form of the language required in GCSE examinations. Most of the girls studying Arabic have had very little previous experience of the language. The teaching seen ranged from satisfactory to very good. The opportunity for all girls to study a community language reflects the school's commitment to meeting the needs of its multi-ethnic population. The teachers have had to develop most of their own teaching material and resources for students. This shows a high level of commitment, which is reflected in good examination results.

70. In most European language lessons students with English as an additional language, do as well as other students because nearly all are working in an unfamiliar language. However one instance was observed where a newly arrived student was set a separate task even though much of the lesson was appropriate being conducted in the target language with visual resources.
71. In 2002 National Curriculum assessments for 14 year olds show attainment in modern foreign languages below national averages. Assessments for 2003 are in line with provisional national averages. This does not match the standards seen during the inspection, and reflects some inconsistencies in the assessment of students' work. Data is not used sufficiently to inform lesson planning. Marking and feedback in German are good, in Spanish are mixed (unsatisfactory to satisfactory) and in French are poor.
72. GCSE results in 2002 show that in Spanish and Bengali achievement was in line with national figures. In French performance was below that nationally. There are no results yet in German as it was first introduced to Year 9 in 2001. Provisional results for 2003 show that one of the subjects girls did best in compared with other subjects was Bengali. Achievement at the higher A*-C grades in French and Spanish was disappointing. Students perform well in the community languages.
73. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall and there are some strong elements in the leadership of the modern foreign languages area. The languages college development plan shows vision and has clear aims. The learning manager provides a good role model for his team. Students have the opportunity to further their progress through trips abroad, for example last year's trip to Germany and the previous year's trip to France, and extra-curricular study and revision clubs.
74. Since the last inspection performance has not improved, partly due to lack of stability in staffing. Provision has become better under the leadership of the recently appointed languages area manager. German and Italian have been introduced and clear expectations of teaching and learning are in place. The department now works collaboratively towards shared goals, which was not true at the time of the last inspection. A rigorous system of monitoring and evaluation of standards of teaching and learning has yet to be established.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Leadership and management of the department are good.
- The National Strategy in mathematics for 11 to 14 year olds is well in place and has significantly contributed to the good progress made by the department since the last inspection.
- Students' achievement is good and attainment in national tests has improved.
- Assessment is good and used well to inform teaching.
- The use of information and communication technology during lessons is inconsistent and underused.
- Strategies to improve written explanations are not yet sufficiently developed.

Commentary

75. Students enter the school in Year 7 with below average attainment. In 2002 students' performance in national tests for 14 year olds was below average compared to national standards but well above average compared to similar schools. It shows good progress by the students since entering the school. Performance in the national tests in 2003 improved and is close to provisional national averages. The standards of work seen during the inspection are in line with national expectations and show good progress. Students' achievement is good. In a high ability Year 9 group the level of work was clearly above national expectations for this age group.
76. In 2002 most students gained a GCSE. Students' attainment at the higher A*-C levels is below average compared to national standards, but is well above that of similar schools. These results represent very good progress in the students' GCSE years, with a particular increase in the proportion of students gaining the top A* and A grades. In 2003 the proportion of students gaining A*-C fell slightly showing average progress, but this was still well above average compared to similar schools. In work seen during the inspection, standards are in line with the national average showing good progress with early indications of an increase in the proportion of students gaining A* and A. Students' achievement is good. In a Year 11 high ability group, students' high level of work in algebra will enable them to gain an A* or A at GCSE.
77. Teaching and learning are good, particularly in Years 10 and 11. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use questioning well to find out what students already know so that they can build upon it. A variety of teaching styles that include the use of a good range of practical equipment, ensure all students are involved. For example, teachers successfully use visual resources such as number lines and flash cards to support the less able students. Teachers help students with special educational needs or with English as an additional language by emphasising keywords and explaining technical vocabulary, so that all students achieve well. The teachers' good use of language now needs to be developed further to support and encourage written explanations and reasoning. Information and communication technology is not yet used consistently enough within the department to improve all students' mathematical understanding and develop further their information and communication technology skills.
78. Leadership and management of the department are good. The manager has a clear vision of where mathematics is going and the improvements needed to get there. The structure of the mathematics department is clear with distinct responsibilities for each member of the team. The handbook is comprehensive and helpful. Schemes of work give advice on time, resources and activities for the more able. Training for the department has been used productively by focussing on issues, such as the greater involvement of students in the lesson, identified from lesson observations. The development plan is clear and recognises the areas of improvement needed for mathematics to progress.
79. Assessment procedures are good. Data given from the management team is used productively to set targets for students and raise expectations of teachers. Close monitoring of students' progress ensures any underachievement is identified and addressed. Constructive comments are used well to inform students of their progress and how they can improve.
80. The National Strategy in mathematics for 11 to 14 year olds is used well and has significantly contributed to the good progress made by the department since the last inspection. Activities and tasks match the level of ability of the group and students in the higher achieving sets are sufficiently challenged. There is, however, some lack of challenge for higher attaining students in mixed ability Year 7 classes.

Mathematics across the curriculum

81. Mathematics across the curriculum is satisfactory. In design and technology students construct models well using scale drawings. In Art they use the correct terminology for reflections and rotations and in science they accurately draw line graphs of temperature against time to illustrate the change of state of wax. A policy for mathematics across the curriculum is developing and has included a whole school training day on data handling. This has had a positive impact on the curriculum, with examples of data display in English and design and technology. All students have a numeracy target but teachers' awareness of students' numeracy levels and approaches to teaching calculation require further improvement. Students' number skills are satisfactory overall.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pass rate at GCSE is good when compared with that of similar schools, although the proportion of higher A*-C grades is low.
- Some students do not achieve enough in Years 7 to 9.
- Students respond well to teaching that interests and involves them in practical activity.
- There are weaknesses in assessment and marking in Years 7 to 9.
- The National Strategy in science for 11 to 14 year olds is being introduced well in science.
- Opportunities for the use of information and communication technology in science are inconsistent.

Commentary

82. Students' achievement in science by the time they leave school is satisfactory. Although standards in science are below average overall they represent sound progress given students below average standards on entry to the school. Progress for students in Years 7 to 9 is not as good as that for students in Years 10 and 11. This is because teachers better meet the different learning needs of older students.
83. Since the last inspection, standards for 11 to 14 year olds have improved, but are not yet as good as those in English and mathematics. In 2002, the results in national tests for 14 year olds were well below the national average and, although better than those for students in similar schools, show unsatisfactory progress since the students were 11 years of age. Provisional test results for 2003 show no significant improvement. Current standards in Year 9 are below national expectations. The average and above average students make satisfactory and sometimes good progress from the age of 11 years. However, the achievement of some girls, particularly the less able is unsatisfactory. Teaching does not make abstract concepts, such as what happens to particles in simple chemical reactions, easy for these students to understand and this leads to insufficient progress in learning.
84. Standards for students in Years 10 and 11 are also below average overall. The most able Year 11 students make good progress. Other students make satisfactory progress, but a below average number of students are on course to achieve the higher GCSE A*-C grades next summer. Recent GCSE examination results reflect this pattern. The school enters more students for double award science than other schools nationally and almost all students achieve a result. In 2002, achievement since 14 years of age was good with the most able achieving A/A* grades. In 2003, there was some disruption in staffing and the proportion of higher A*-C GCSE grades fell.
85. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Since the last inspection, science teaching has improved and in most lessons teachers use a good range of strategies to develop students' understanding of scientific ideas. In all lessons, teachers insist on high standards of behaviour

and students respond well. Teachers use homework satisfactorily to reinforce and extend the students' learning. Science lessons make a good contribution to the development of students' literacy skills. In addition to key words, teachers use poetry and letters in some lessons. Such strategies effectively involve students in lessons and stimulate their interest in science.

86. In Years 7 to 9 teachers follow the guidance of the national science strategy for 11 to 14 year olds. Particular strengths are the way teachers start the lessons crisply and most make it clear to the students what they want them to learn. However there is some unsatisfactory teaching in Years 7 to 9 and lesson observations and students' work show that teachers do not plan sufficiently for the wide range of ability in these classes. As a result the learning and achievement of some students suffers. In Years 10 and 11, where classes have a narrower range of ability, teachers match the work more effectively to the learning needs of students. Students of all abilities make better progress. There were examples of specific learning materials for Year 11 students with English as an additional language or learning difficulties that supported the development of their reading skills and helped these students to understand more easily the work being studied.
87. In most lessons students with English as an additional language and students with special educational needs make progress equivalent to that of their peers. When available specific learning support for students at the early stages of learning English is good. In most lessons teachers are aware of these students' needs and other students are helpful. Specific learning support for students with special educational needs is satisfactory overall, although one instance of unsatisfactory support was seen. Sometimes learning support is not as effective as it could be, because the class teacher does not plan sufficiently with the learning support teacher or teaching assistant.
88. Assessment is satisfactory. Teachers track achievement through regular tests. Most marking is regular and supportive. Marking is best for older GCSE students. In Years 10 and 11, students have a clear view of what the examinations demand. For younger students, marking is insufficiently focused on standards, does not always explain how students can improve and work is occasionally praised when it is inaccurate. As a result marking does not accurately inform teachers' planning.
89. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Routines are well established, priorities are clear and the science learning manager leads a team that works together well to improve the curriculum, and teaching and learning. There are some good uses of information and communication technology in science but opportunities for students are inconsistent. Technicians provide very good support to teachers. Given some improvement in results in national tests for 14 year olds, the good introduction of the national science strategy for 14 year olds, and the good pass rate at GCSE maintained, improvement since the last inspection is judged satisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching ensures high standards of behaviour.
- Standards for 14 year olds and 16 year olds are still too low, although many students now make satisfactory progress under improved provision.
- The quality and quantity of computer equipment are good and are helping to improve work in the subject.
- Students' attitudes to the subject are good.
- Students do not have consistent access and opportunities in all subjects to use information and communication technology to support their learning.

Commentary

90. Standards achieved by 14 year olds in 2002 and 2003 are unsatisfactory. National assessments for this age group were well below national averages. Standards of work seen for current 14 year olds are still well below national expectations. These students did not have the benefit of computer lessons in Year 8 or regular lessons taken by qualified teachers in Year 7. As a result of this and staffing difficulties, students' achievement in Years 8 and 9 since entry to the school has been unsatisfactory. For example students in Year 9 have difficulty with the basic features of word processing, such as the right justification of text. Although Year 7 students make satisfactory progress as a result of well planned, challenging activities and can enter text, navigate around the software, and import images to produce presentations about themselves, their level of work is still below the level expected for this age of student.
91. The examination performance in 2002 of 16 year olds taking the GNVQ Part One was well below that nationally. The provisional figures for 2003 indicate that the pass rate continues to be well below the national average. The factors that affected students' progress lower down the school also badly affected the standards achieved in the GNVQ course. Work seen in lessons for current students in Years 10 and 11, whilst still below expected levels, shows improving standards. Some higher attaining students are producing above average work. However, achievement over time has been unsatisfactory.
92. Teaching in the subject is satisfactory. Some teaching is good. Teachers have a good command of the subject. In the better lessons planning and structure are good, class discussions are effectively developed and productivity is high. Good use of questioning and the technology enhance learning. In less effective lessons, teachers do not take the time to check learning and test understanding. Students' response is generally positive, and they have the capacity to work independently or in harmony with others. Teachers support students with special educational needs and English as an additional language effectively ensuring similar levels of achievement as for other groups of students.
93. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. However, as a result of staffing problems this is not so across the curriculum where much is still to be developed to ensure effective provision in all subject areas. The recently appointed subject leader has made a major contribution to curriculum and assessment planning. Systems and procedures are now in place although the full impact of the work is yet to be seen in improved student achievement.
94. The very recent developments, together with the improvements in accommodation and resources, have served to move the subject forward to some extent since the last inspection. Standards remain low, but the subject now has the potential to make improvements to the overall provision. Statutory requirements are met and the school has an effective safe user policy in place. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

95. Provision for information and communication technology across the curriculum is satisfactory, although practice is inconsistent across subject areas. All students in the school have taught lessons in information and communication technology and are therefore able to develop the skills to make more effective use of opportunities in other subject areas. There is good access to computers during lunchtimes and after school, when teachers are available to help with coursework. The quality of learning opportunities in both formal and informal sessions is unclear as no assessment or monitoring are currently in place. The responsibility for this area of work rests with a senior manager and not with the subject's learning manager.
96. In design and technology students have good opportunities to develop their information and communication technology skills through the use of computer aided design and computer aided manufacture. There is also effective use of computers in geography, art and GCSE

music. In English, mathematics and science provision is inconsistent. In modern foreign language and religious education students make little use of information and communication technology. Elsewhere use is satisfactory. Students in Year 11 have good opportunities to use computers to support their GCSE work through the weekly study skills lesson.

HUMANITIES

The humanities department of the school has responsibility for the humanities programme in Year 7 which includes geography, history, and personal, social, health and religious education; the separate courses of geography, history, and personal, social, health and religious education in Years 8 to 11; and the humanities course in Years 10 and 11. In this section religious education is reported on in full and there are shorter reports for history and geography as these subjects were sampled. Personal, social and health education is reported on in full in a separate section on page 37.

Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

97. Standards and achievement are satisfactory overall. GCSE results in 2002 were below average. They improved in 2003 and work seen indicates that Year 10 students are now approaching average standards. This is because teaching has improved and the school's focus on developing skills in reading and writing is beginning to help GCSE students to earn higher marks. Students entering Year 7 have had very mixed primary school experiences. In 2002 at the end of Year 9, national assessments were at the national average for girls' geography, so these students had made good progress. The 2003 teacher assessments indicate further improving standards.
98. Four lessons were sampled, covering Years 8, 9 and 11 together with scrutiny of a wide range work from Years 7 to 11. Overall, teaching is good, but there is still a need to provide more challenging work for higher attaining students in Years 10 and 11. Questioning does not always expect detailed and thoughtful answers from students that moves their learning onto the higher levels expected for the achievement of GCSE A*-C grades. Extremely knowledgeable teachers have developed very good working relationships with students whose enthusiasm for geography is high. The department is developing a detailed marking scheme that will better inform students about what they need to do to improve.
99. Leadership is good. An outstanding strength is the way that geography work builds on the multicultural background of the students. Global awareness is very good. Students understand a great deal about different peoples, their societies and world-wide issues such as poverty and pollution. Students work extremely hard, often in their own time, at their chosen topics. However the learning manager needs to ensure the most effective ways of teaching and marking are more widely shared. Although standards are beginning to improve, the low standards achieved at GCSE identified in the last report have not been fully corrected. The department has worked hard to identify why results are not as good as they could be. Changes in syllabus and more focussed teaching now seem to be improving matters.

History

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

100. Teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2002 indicate that standards are in line with those seen nationally. The 2002 GCSE history results were significantly below the national average for grades in the A*-C range but close to those achieved in similar schools for grades A*-G. The unvalidated GCSE results for 2003 show an 11 per cent increase in the A*-C range which would bring standards into line with those seen nationally. Evidence from lessons and work sampling indicates that student achievement is good. Attainment in Years 9 and 11 is now in line with national expectations.

101. The quality of teaching is good overall with some very good features. The teachers' good knowledge and the sheer enthusiasm they display in lessons stimulate, encourage and foster a real interest in learning amongst all students. Higher attaining students are given challenging tasks and students who find essay writing difficult or who have English as an additional language are supported well. Opportunities for independent learning are encouraged through the extensive use of pair and group work in lessons and through the use of information and communication technology. Leadership and management of the subject are good.

Religious Education

Overall, provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The standards of work seen in religious education are good as a result of the effective leadership of the learning manager for this subject area.
- Good planning and the effective use of resources lead students to learn well.
- Students produce extended and reflective writing of high quality because of the high value attached to personal response.
- Teachers' effective questioning skills support high levels of oral and written analysis.
- Assessment practices are developing in the area, but do not yet fully support achievement.
- Teaching by temporary non-specialist staff lowers the standards achieved.

Commentary

102. Standards of work seen are in line with national expectations and are frequently higher. This is particularly true of students' work relating to the impact of religion on the lives of individuals and communities. These standards are achieved through the valuable direction of the learning manager for this subject area, whose planning and production of resources for a non-specialist team effectively support students' achievement. Religious education makes a very good contribution to students' spiritual and moral development. Provision meets the requirements of the Newham Agreed Syllabus, although the time allowed for religious education in Years 7 to 9 is only just sufficient to ensure coverage of the curriculum. The school is currently reviewing this position.

103. The curriculum is now well designed for Years 7 to 9 and students' work clearly demonstrates achievement from year to year. The new bridging unit, designed to support achievement from primary school to secondary school, is not yet sufficiently well developed to build on previous learning. Similarly, the use of national curriculum levels to support learning is too new to demonstrate achievement, but will be an effective tool for doing so in the future. The introduction of the GCSE short course means that students now make good progress in religious education throughout the school.

104. Teaching is good. Teachers use imaginative resources in religious education. Activities such as the acting out of the marriage service and the subsequent prayer of thanks and thoughts for the future lead students to consider in detail the solemnity of making religious and legal promises. Practices in different religions and cultures are sensitively explored. Teachers' good questioning encourages students to reflect impressively about how these may affect the way people live. High value is attached to personal response and students are sensitive and exploratory in their written work as a result. Students enjoy the good range of active learning strategies in lessons and respond with confidence. The best lessons make specific provision for the most able students and those with learning difficulties. Teachers make sure students understand any specialist terms. Assessment practices are developing within the area and will increasingly support the progress of all students. Opportunities for using information and communication technology are under-developed and do not support learning. Lessons taken by temporary non-specialist staff are sometimes unsuccessful because the teacher does not have effective relationships with the students or a secure understanding of the subject matter.

105. Leadership and management of religious education within the personal, social, health and religious education programme are good. The learning manager for religious education has a clear vision for the future of the subject within the school and has introduced some key developments this year. It is to her credit, and proof of the good quality of her planning and resources, that achievement levels are higher than at the time of the last report. This has been secured through the support and training she offers to a non-specialist team. Departmental self-evaluation is not yet sufficiently rigorous but is set to become more so with the introduction of clearer measures of achievement in Years 7 to 9 and the GCSE course for students in Years 10 and 11. The unsatisfactory teaching is to some extent the result of under-developed systems of monitoring and review, but is largely due to the school's continued difficulty in recruiting a specialist teacher of religious education.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and Technology

Overall the quality of provision in design and technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards and achievement across the subject are good.
- The leadership and management of the subject are very good.
- Students' attitudes and capacity to work are good.
- Teachers' command of the subject is very good.
- Good assessment data is not used as effectively as it could be to monitor overall subject performance

Commentary

106. Standards in Years 7, 8 and 9 are good. Students come into the school with below average skills in design and technology. By the end of Year 9 students' attainment is above that expected for their age. This is supported by good national assessments for 14 year olds in 2002 and 2003. The quality of work produced and the presentation of designs are above average. Design skills are well developed with students benefiting from reasonable access to computer equipment. Students develop skills in food, graphical products, textiles and resistant materials. Some higher attaining students produce work that is well above the national average.

107. The standard of work produced by students in Year 11 is above average. Although the overall examination performance in 2002 was average, performance in individual subjects exceeded expectation. Provisional figures in 2003 for textiles, resistant materials and graphical products indicate performance above national averages. Food technology did not match the national figures. However, the performance of those taking the subject was better than predicted against their prior attainment. The GCSE course in child development and family is taken by approximately a quarter of the upper years, and results are good, based on students' previous learning, with consistently higher achievement than expected.

108. The overall achievement of students is good across all aspects of the subject. Students have a good understanding of the design processes. Their application, commitment and positive attitudes ensure good quality products. They explain clearly the brief and recognise the importance of the result for the end user. In the lower years students have a good understanding of the importance of this and what influences design. The higher attaining students pay close attention to detail, producing accurate designs that result in well-made products. Overall students make good progress through Years 7, 8 and 9, and maintain this good progress through the upper years. Those with special educational needs receive some support from learning support assistants, but more so through additional teacher help. The level of assistance ensures that their achievements match those of other groups of students. Students with English as an additional language also achieve well.

109. Teaching and learning are good across the subject. Very good subject knowledge ensures good learning for students. The most effective lessons enthuse students and motivate them through innovative and imaginative styles. Teachers pitch their teaching at the correct level to engage all students. They are aware of different learning rates and manage to present the work to meet student needs. Teachers make expectations clear and determine the pace through effective monitoring and timely whole class discussions. Sometimes opportunities to test learning through questioning are missed. Teachers lack the level of assertiveness to fully control the pace, which affects the rate of progress. Fortunately students do not experience less effective lessons too frequently.
110. Leadership is very good. It is visionary and has high expectations of students and staff. The management is equally very effective. A very good range of curriculum opportunities give students experience in most materials. Assessment is very well organised so that students have a clear understanding of how well they are performing. Comments on work are generally diagnostic informing students how to improve. Data is used well to monitor student performance but the information is not fully utilised to monitor all aspects of subject performance. The spacious accommodation is well equipped although computer-aided manufacturing equipment is just adequate for the demands of the curriculum.
111. The subject has made good progress since the previous inspection. Standards have improved. Accommodation remains good but equipment levels have remained constant and therefore are now good rather than very good.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Provision in art and design and in drama was sampled.

Art and design

Provision in art is **good**.

112. Art makes a significant contribution to girls' achievement in and beyond the classroom. Teaching is good overall and often very good. Students enter in Year 7 with limited experience of art and below average standards. Work seen is below average for girls by the end of Year 9 but close to that expected nationally by the end of Year 11. Lessons are well organised and planned to broaden students' knowledge and understanding. They achieve well and make good reference to different cultures, artists, and artistic styles through activities that include pottery and printmaking. Resources for information and communication technology are limited but computers are used well for research and to develop images. In the 2002 GCSE examination the proportion of top A* grades was above the national average for girls. The proportion attaining a grade C or better was below the national average but achievement was good overall. In 2003 results fell slightly. Work seen in Year 11 sketchbooks and folders is average and observational drawing and composition in Year 10 is above average.
113. Specialist teaching is very good in Years 10 and 11 and ensures all students are fully included. High expectations and good explanation and discussion involve students and motivate them. The department is managed efficiently whilst the head of department is on maternity leave. Out of school projects such as community arts projects and after school art lessons contribute well to students' learning and personal development. Good assessment procedures are in place to guide students. Lively displays of students' work are used well to enhance the Victorian accommodation that has seen some improvement since the previous inspection.

Drama

Provision in drama is **very good**.

114. Drama was a strength at the time of the last inspection and it remains so. Standards are above national averages and achievement is high. The results in GCSE examinations have consistently been amongst the highest in the school. Students' understanding of the elements of drama as a distinct discipline is established early in Years 7 to 9 through very good teaching which is both challenging and supportive. This understanding is further developed in Years 10 and 11 where students display very high levels of engagement, and respond very well to high levels of challenge. A distinctive strength of teaching in drama is the focus on developing students' extended use of spoken language in a wide range of styles, both in role and in reflection and discussion following performance or improvisation. This approach particularly supports the learning of students at the early stages of learning English and those with special educational needs.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards achieved at the end of Year 11 are high because of good teaching and the high level of individual support that is given to students in lessons and at extra study sessions.
- The department provides a range of enrichment activities that contribute strongly to students' musical, spiritual, social and cultural development.
- Restrictions of accommodation limit the achievement of students in Years 8 and 9.
- There are very good relationships between teachers and students which create a very positive climate for learning.

Commentary

115. Students enter the school with standards which are average. Students currently in Year 9 will achieve standards which are similar to national averages. Recent GCSE results have been consistently high and on average, students achieve more than a grade higher in music than in their other subjects.

116. The progress of students from Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory. Students achieve better during lessons in Year 7 than in Years 8 and 9 because the limitations of accommodation make concentration difficult in extended group activity. Noise levels in the classroom quickly become high and the arrangement of workstations in both classrooms makes it difficult for students to work together. In Years 10 and 11, progress is very good. Students work independently on tasks that are clearly explained by the teachers, and many use the computer effectively as a resource. Teachers undertake one to one sessions outside of lesson times, which enables individual learning needs to be effectively met.

117. Teaching is good overall. Lessons are paced well and start with an interesting practical activity, which immediately engages students in learning and leads effectively in to the main part of the lesson. Students are enthusiastic and self-confident because the tasks set for them are interesting, challenging and well matched to their learning needs. Because they like the subject, the attitudes of students towards the teachers and each other are always good and sometimes outstanding. Students from different cultural backgrounds work well together in groups, exploring musical styles both from within and outside their own traditions. Teachers do not make specific provision for students for whom English is a second language although the non-verbal nature of music, and the good modelling strategies that teachers use, enable all students to become easily involved in practical music making. More able students are encouraged to support and lead those who are less confident, although this sometimes means that they are not stretched enough.

118. The department is well led and managed by teachers who devote a lot of time and energy to the needs of students. Teachers have good strategies for assessing and supporting learning, although in Years 7 to 9 students themselves do not know what level they are working at, and what they need to do to improve. Whilst the take-up of the regular extra-curricular activities on offer is modest, many students benefit from participating in specific projects, which involve them in practical and creative work alongside musicians and artists from within and beyond the local community. Such activities broaden students' musical experience and also contribute strongly to their personal development and sense of self worth. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good,

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The wide range of extra-curricular activities is very good.
- Relationships with students and their attitude to the subject are very good.
- There are insufficient full time specialist teachers to match the needs of the curriculum.
- Poor accommodation lowers standards.
- Students in Years 9, 10 and 11 do not reach the standard expected of them as achievement is affected by lack of time on the timetable.
- Teaching in Years 7 and 9, especially in gymnastics and netball, is good.

Commentary

119. Standards are below those expected at the end of Year 9 and Year 11 in physical education. Standards are similar to those found nationally in GCSE examinations. Students' progress is hindered by a number of factors: insufficient time on the timetable in Years 9 to 11, not enough full time specialist teachers to teach the curriculum, the poor state of the playground and the limited availability of indoor teaching areas. All these factors combine so that students find it difficult to reach the required national standard in statutory physical education.

120. Achievement of students is good in Years 7 to 9 and is satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Students with special educational needs and those who are new to the English language make good progress, because of the good use of demonstration to make instructions clear. All groups of students are included well in lessons and the school ensures that cultural and religious customs are observed when necessary; for example when Moslem girls go swimming.

121. Teaching and learning are usually satisfactory and are good in gymnastics and netball in Years 7 to 9. Teachers have good subject knowledge and students understand what they are expected to do in order to make progress. Relationships between staff and students are very good which leads to a productive working atmosphere in lessons.

122. The leadership and management of the department are satisfactory and have some strengths. The learning co-ordinator for physical education is a good practitioner and leads by example. She understands the need for sufficient full-time specialist staff, good accommodation and sufficient teaching time, but, despite all her efforts, she has not succeeded in improving this provision in the school. She is not complacent and aims to improve the performance of the department further. A few health and safety issues identified during the inspection were immediately addressed. There is a strong feeling of teamwork and mutual respect between staff.

123. Sports and activities offered to the students out of lesson time and after school are very good. A wide range of lunchtime and after-school activities complement and enrich physical education for the students. There are also strong and productive links with the community and

local sports clubs. This makes physical activity enjoyable, both in and out of school, for most students.

124. Overall improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. There has been no improvement in the state of the playground, which is still cracked, uneven and unsuitable for many activities. The sports hall is still barely adequate for the size of the school and is often unavailable during examinations and whole school activities. Behaviour and motivation of the students are still good. New changing facilities have improved overcrowding. The introduction of GCSE physical education instead of dance has improved results in GCSE examinations.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

Apart from GNVQ ICT, reported upon under information and communication technology, the school only runs an accredited Life Skills course under this heading. This course is targeted at students who may find too many GCSE subjects over demanding. The course is well-planned and delivered and students make good progress in their learning. It helps to raise their self-esteem.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

This curriculum area is taught within the school's personal, health, social and religious education programme which runs throughout Years 8 to 11. Careers education and guidance is included within this course from Year 9. A humanities course in Year 7 covers personal, social, health, and religious education and also history and geography. Units of work in all areas were not necessarily being taught at the time of the inspection. Work in religious education is reported on under Humanities.

Provision in personal, social and health education, including citizenship is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership and management are good and are dedicated to achieving high standards.
- Good planning enables all elements of the course to meet the requirements for national curriculum citizenship.
- The wide range of expertise and experience within the team of teachers who deliver the course ensures it is taught well.

Commentary

125. Standards and achievement within the personal, social, health and religious education programme are good. This carefully planned and structured course enables students to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in a cohesive way. The impact of this approach to learning is that students study a range of themes, drawing on knowledge from other curriculum areas, and this results in a deeper understanding of more complex issues. The course makes a significant contribution to students' personal development and their understanding of global issues and the diverse ethnic society in which they will live. It also incorporates statutory requirements concerning sex education, drugs education and careers within appropriate contexts.
126. The quality of teaching is good. The course is taught by a group of teachers who have a range of suitable subject specialisms. Each one has total responsibility for a group of students for the year. The best teaching is well structured and successfully involves students in thoughtful discussion through pair and group work. Most teaching observed during the inspection covered units of work in religious education and are reported on under religious education. Teachers carefully monitor and assess individual student progress both in lessons and through formal assessment opportunities, and as result, learning is good.
127. The school carried out an audit of whole school provision with regard to the new citizenship curriculum in December 2000. This resulted in key actions to address any perceived gaps in

provision. These included such issues as Year 10 knowledge and understanding of political literacy, now addressed with a specific learning module. The audit also identified fewer opportunities for certain students to take part in citizenship activities in and around the school and the local community. The school addressed this well such as through the introduction of school stewards in Year 9 and additional activities with the youth project in school. The new scheme of work was then launched as a whole-school initiative, with training led by the learning manager for personal, social, health and religious education. As a result all strands of the citizenship programme are now well established in the school.

128. The school has good arrangements in place to fulfil requirements to assess, record and report achievements for 14 year olds in citizenship in the summer of 2004. These include student self-assessment and contributions from other subject areas to aspects of the course.
129. Leadership and management of this area of the school's work are good. The learning manager has a clear vision, for the way in which this course should develop in the future. She has written detailed schemes of work, which enable her to ensure that the curriculum needs of each of the subject areas included within this course are covered. These are very helpful for those teachers involved in delivering the programme of work.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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