

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **STRATFORD SCHOOL**

Forest Gate, London

LEA area: Newham

Unique reference number: 102788

Headteacher: Keith Holt

Lead inspector: David M Bain  
3258

Dates of inspection: 2<sup>nd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> December 2003

Inspection number: 262858

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	11-16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	887
School address:	Upton Lane Forest Gate London
Postcode:	E7 9PR
Telephone number:	020 8471 2415
Fax number:	020 8471 4684
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Derek Evans
Date of previous inspection:	18 May 1998

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Stratford is an increasingly popular Foundation School for pupils aged 11-16 in the London Borough of Newham. The school is of average size with 887 on roll, but with over twice as many boys than girls. It serves a culturally diverse local community. Whilst three-quarters of pupils are of Asian background, the other quarter includes pupils from a wide range of ethnic groups, including a significant number from white British and black African and Caribbean backgrounds. There is a high level of mobility: last year 58 joined and 49 left during the school year. About a tenth come from families of refugees or asylum seekers. Many pupils come from areas where there are high levels of social and economic deprivation. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is decreasing, but remains well over twice the national average. The vast majority of pupils, about seven-eighths, have first languages other than English. This is very high. About a sixth are at an early stage of English acquisition and the school receives money to support the language needs of about half the school population. About a sixth of pupils are identified as having special educational needs. This is broadly in line with the national average, as is the number with statements. Pupils' attainment on entry is well below average. The school is in the process of applying for specialist status in mathematics and computing.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
3258	David Bain	Lead inspector	
9980	Jo Adams	Lay inspector	
12003	Andrew Marfleet	Team inspector	English
8798	Dennis Maxwell	Team inspector	Mathematics
32777	Jim McVeigh	Team inspector	Science
3642	David Williamson	Team inspector	Art
2686	Brian Oppenheim	Team inspector	Design and technology
32198	Gerry Gurhy	Team inspector	History
32297	Chris Martin	Team inspector	Geography, PSHE/citizenship
6364	Geoff Strack	Team inspector	ICT
31549	Helen Moulton	Team inspector	Music, drama
12408	Alan Frith	Team inspector	French
15303	Mike Smith	Team inspector	Physical education
15926	Janet Dyson	Team inspector	Religious education
1880	Garry Bignell	Team inspector	Special educational needs, English as an additional language
7636	Anil Sinha	Team inspector	Community languages

The inspection contractor was:

ICP

360 Lee Valley Technopark  
 Ashley Road  
 London  
 N17 9LN

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Stratford is a very effective school. It provides a very good education for its pupils**, who make excellent progress overall. Most teaching is good, much very good or outstanding. It is a caring school, which responds to pupils' needs well. Pupils are keen to learn. Racial harmony is excellent, as are relationships throughout the school. The school is very well led. The school gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Achievement of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is excellent.
- Standards attained at GCSE are above average and well above in mathematics, science and music.
- Pupils' attitudes and attendance are very good.
- The degree of racial harmony in the school is outstanding. The quality of relationships is a strength of the school.
- The commitment of all in the school to inclusion, promotion of equality and concern for the needs of individuals is excellent.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good, because most teaching is at least good and learning is often fun.
- The school is very effectively led and managed. All staff work effectively to realise the high aspirations they have for pupils.
- The school's accommodation is unsatisfactory.
- Curricular organisation and provision in the arts, languages and vocational education impede progress.
- There is much good assessment data, but it is not used consistently to inform pupils how to improve, nor is it collated effectively to track pupils' progress.

The school has made very good progress since the last inspection. Standards have improved significantly. The quality of teaching has improved. Very good progress has been made on the key issues identified in the last inspection. Attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education has risen and standards in French are improving. Issues related to the attainment of boys have been addressed well in most subjects. Middle management is generally very effective and provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

**Pupils' achievement is excellent. It increases as they move through the school.** They enter the school with standards which are well below average and leave with them above average. Standards in national tests at age 14 are just below average: still well below in English tests, but average in mathematics and close to average in science. This represents good achievement. Performance at GCSE is above average. The proportion achieving at least five grades A\*-C has increased significantly and that achieving five grades A\*-G is well above average. When compared to similar schools, based upon prior attainment, performance is very high and represents excellent achievement. (A\* in the table above places the school in the top five per cent of similar schools.) Attainment is particularly good in science, mathematics and music. Good achievement was seen in all subjects across the curriculum. Poor literacy standards on entry are addressed effectively.

Achievement of pupils with special educational needs or English as an additional language matches that of other pupils. Boys achieve well in comparison to boys nationally.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good.** Pupils have a very strong desire to learn, achieve and gain the most they can from school. This is reflected in the levels of attendance, which are very good. The degree of racial harmony in the school is outstanding. Whilst there is some challenging behaviour in lessons, overall behaviour is good. The school's provision for the development of pupils' personal qualities is very good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is very good. The quality of teaching is very good,** as is the quality of pupils' learning. It is the amalgam of good, very good and outstanding practice, which occurs in about three-quarters of lessons, which makes it so. Excellent teaching was seen in drama, physical education and religious education, very good in almost all other subjects. Learning is often fun. Teachers use a variety of stimulating activities, which encourage pupils to collaborate, discuss and question. Good partnership teaching ensures individual pupils receive effective targeted support. Good assessment data is not collated effectively to track pupils' progress.

Curricular provision is satisfactory. It meets broad statutory requirements, but provision in the arts, languages and vocational education could be strengthened. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Enrichment is good, especially participation in sport and revision classes. The match of teachers and support staff to the curriculum is good. Accommodation is unsatisfactory. Stratford is a caring school. It provides good support, advice and guidance to its pupils. It values and acts upon the views of pupils and encourages their involvement. Links with parents are satisfactory. Good use is made of the community to support teaching. There are very good links with the local primary schools.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are very good.** The head's leadership is strong and reflective. He is supported ably by senior and middle managers who enable all staff to work effectively to realise the school's high aspirations. The commitment of all in the school for the needs of individuals is excellent. The school is managed very well, with an emphasis on successful teamwork and honest and reflective self-evaluation. Both performance management of staff and financial management are very good. Governance of the school is good.

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

Most parents are satisfied with the school. Only a small minority expressed concerns. These mostly relate to the poor behaviour of a minority of pupils and to the quality of information provided by the school. Similarly the vast majority of pupils have positive views about the school. They too express concern about the behaviour of some of their peers. Some feel they could be made to work harder in some subjects and many that teachers do not always listen to their ideas.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- review curricular provision and organisation;
- ensure further innovative action is taken to provide accommodation appropriate to education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century;
- bring greater consistency to assessment, ensuring it is shared effectively across the school to track the progress of individuals and groups of pupils;

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- provide for a daily act of collective worship.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Overall, pupils' achievement is excellent. Standards are well below national levels on entry to the school, just below at the end of Year 9 and above average by the end of Year 11. In 2003, GCSE results in English were average, those in mathematics and science well above average. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs or English as an additional language matches that of other pupils.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement increases as they move through the school. Achievement by the end of Year 9 is good; achievement from Year 9 to 11 is excellent.
- In 2003, the proportion of pupils attaining five or more grades A\*-C at GCSE was above average and five or more A\*-G, well above average in comparison with all schools nationally.
- Successful strategies are used to raise the achievement of boys. Although, overall, girls achieve better results than boys at GCSE, the gap is narrower than nationally.
- In 2003, standards in national tests at the end of Year 9 in English were well below average and dropped for the second year in succession.
- Results at GCSE were well above average in double award science and mathematics. They were also well above average in music and above average in art and textiles.
- The school successfully addresses weaknesses in pupils' standards of literacy.

#### Commentary

1. Pupils' achievement by the end of Year 9 is good. Overall, their attainment on entry is well below average. For the current Year 7, it was below average in mathematics and well below average in English and science. Many pupils arrive at the school with low literacy levels. About a sixth of pupils are at an early stage of English language acquisition. By the end of Year 9, standards overall have risen significantly. In 2002, standards achieved in national tests were average overall. They were average in mathematics and science, but below average in English because fewer pupils achieved Level 6 than nationally. In 2003, standards attained overall dropped slightly to just below average. However, this masked differences between subjects. Results in mathematics improved, remaining average compared to all schools. Standards in science remained the same, but were below the national average. However, standards in English were well below average.

2. Whilst results in 2002 indicated that pupils' achievement by the end of Year 9 was very good, results in 2003 indicate satisfactory achievement overall. Taking pupils' prior attainment on entry into account, they achieved well below their expected level in English, but above expectations in science and well above in mathematics. Boys perform better than girls in mathematics and science, but below girls in English. The school's detailed analyses of results suggest some underachievement by girls compared to performance nationally and in Newham schools in English and science, whilst boys achieve better than boys in other Newham schools in all three subjects and better than boys nationally in mathematics.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	30.1 (32.2)	33.4 (33.3)
Mathematics	35.7 (34.8)	35.4 (34.7)
Science	32.8 (32.7)	33.6 (33.3)

*There were 176 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*



3. Pupils' achievement from the end of Year 9 to Year 11 is excellent. Their attainment in external examinations at the end of Year 11 is good. This represents excellent progress, given their attainment on entry to the school. In 2002, pupils' average point score was above average compared to all pupils nationally. Whilst the proportion achieving five or more grades A\*-C was close to the national average, the proportion achieving five or more grades A\*-G was very high (amongst the top five per cent of all schools nationally). The results of both boys and girls were above average. Whilst girls achieved better results than boys overall, the gap was narrower than nationally. Results in 2003 showed a significant improvement. The proportion achieving five grades A\*-G dropped slightly, but remained well above average compared to all schools. However, the proportion achieving five or more higher grades A\*-C rose significantly. Whilst it was still classified as above the national average, it was very close to being well above. The average point score also rose significantly. Similarly it remained above average compared to all schools, but was close to being well above average (the top 25 per cent of all schools). When compared to similar schools, based upon the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, the school's results were very high in both years. When compared to pupils' prior attainment at the end of Year 9, the average point score achieved in 2002 was well above average. In 2003, it was very high – amongst the top five per cent of similar schools.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	63 (45)	52 (50)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	98 (99)	91 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	100 (100)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	38.6 (36.0)	34.7 (34.7)

*There were 175 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

4. The school identified a number of contributory factors for the improvement in GCSE results in 2003. About four-fifths of pupils remained in school throughout five years, compared to two-thirds the previous year; the ratio of boys to girls was more even than in other years; and information on prior attainment suggests the cohort was abler. These factors do not all pertain to the current Year 11. However, in the one examination they have already taken, a short course in ICT, results were significantly higher than those achieved last year, with three-fifths attaining at least grade C and nearly a quarter A\* or A.

5. Results at GCSE vary significantly between subjects. Those achieved in double award science and in mathematics were well above average in 2003. This represents excellent achievement, especially in science where nearly 70 per cent achieved grades A\*-C. Of the 60 per cent who attained grades A\*-C in mathematics, three-quarters achieved at least grade B. Results in English language and English literature rose significantly and were around the national averages: just above in literature. In the arts, results were varied. In music they were excellent, with over 90 per cent attaining at least grade C, three-quarters at least grade B. Art improved to above national figures, with nearly three-quarters achieving at least grade C, nearly half A or B. A small group in media studies achieved sound results, but those in drama were below expectations partly because of a change of teacher at a crucial point in the course. All pupils study a design and technology subject. Results, overall, improved to just above the national average, with the best results in textiles. Language results also improved, but remain below average in both French and community languages. Performance in geography is consistently lower than in most other subjects, whilst results in history, which were in line with national figures in 2002, declined in 2003. Attainment rose to around national levels in business studies and short course religious education. Absence and injuries impeded progress in physical education, where results were lower than average.

6. The school carries out detailed analyses of its results by gender, ethnicity and prior attainment. Summaries are presented in a pupil achievement report. This is an example of excellent practice.

### Example of outstanding practice

#### **The school's analysis of examination results is exemplary.**

The school carries out detailed analyses of its results by gender, ethnicity and prior attainment. Summaries are presented in a pupil achievement report, which contains analyses on performance by each department. As well as commenting on performance, departments identify successful strategies and also factors which have impeded progress. They identify areas for improvement and strategies that they intend to employ to bring these about.

7. As nationally, girls achieve better than boys at GCSE overall, but the gap is narrower and narrowed further in 2003. About 61 per cent of boys attained five or more grades A\*-C, 67 per cent of girls. Boys' results are well above national figures, whilst girls' results are above. This indicates excellent achievement by both, but especially by boys. However, there are some variations between subjects, particularly in art and languages, where girls achieve significantly better. Although girls also achieved better than boys in business studies, English language and literature, geography and media studies, unusually boys achieved better than girls in history and drama and significantly better in mathematics. In English language, although girls achieved better than boys, the proportion of girls achieving grades A\*-C was below that for girls nationally, whilst the proportion of boys was above. The school analyses results by ethnicity for its largest three groups of pupils: those of Bangladeshi, Indian and Pakistani backgrounds. Whilst in 2002, Indian and Pakistani pupils achieved similar results, in 2003 Indian pupils improved significantly more. Bangladeshi pupils also improved their performance substantially and matched that of Pakistani pupils who made less improvement. Other groups of pupils are relatively small. However, as the ethnicity of the school population does vary between years, tracking performance of different groups as they move through school is essential.

8. The variation between standards attained at GCSE was less apparent in lessons observed. Standards were higher than examination results would suggest in English and French, for example, but not as high in mathematics and science. Experience from previous years suggests that pupils will make significant improvements in standards between the mock examinations in December and the final examinations in June. This is especially true in mathematics and science, where excellent revision programmes have been developed.

9. The school has identified that standards of literacy can be a major barrier to improvement in many subjects. Many pupils in Years 7 to 9 have limited language skills in English, in writing in particular. This is addressed very well both within most subjects and by a targeted programme of withdrawal in Year 7 and additional provision outside lesson times in Year 8. However, there is no doubt that National Curriculum tests in English are not suited to many of the pupils at this school, whose progress over the first three years does not show up in the kinds of writing that are tested. But they are nevertheless achieving well, and a foundation is laid for subsequent success in Year 11, by which time their competence in English is more assured.

10. Achievement in individual lessons is rarely less than satisfactory and good in well over half of those seen. Achievement was very good in a high proportion of French and physical education lessons. Overall, it was also very good in mathematics, religious education and art because pupils' achievement in these lessons is almost always good. A significant amount of very good achievement was also seen in English and design and technology.

11. Achievement was unsatisfactory in some history and geography lessons. Standards in geography are good in Year 7 but by Year 10 they are below average. Achievement, particularly of the most able, is restricted by the over-use of standardised worksheets. Pupils' literacy standards have an impact on achievement in Years 7 and 8 in history, but overall they achieve well and by Year 11 have developed a range of historical skills and, consequently, standards are in line with national expectations. Achievement in music and drama is adversely affected in Years 7 to 9 by the lack of continuity caused by the carousel arrangement, where the subjects are taught in six-week

units, with long gaps between each unit. Achievement in a few subjects is influenced by staffing changes at critical periods in pupils' studies, as in drama for last year's GCSE class. Achievement is also adversely affected by the poor quality of some of the accommodation, as in physical education, and the impact the split site has on curricular organisation.

12. Overall, however, achievement is generally good in individual lessons because the quality of teaching and learning is almost always good or better. Consequently, this has a cumulative impact on pupils as they move through the school resulting in their excellent achievement overall by the time they leave. The school has developed good strategies to raise the achievement of boys in most subjects. The practical nature of many lessons, the use of a variety of activities, the encouragement to discuss, collaborate and carry out research all have a positive impact on raising achievement. In some subjects, such as physical education, achievement is supported by good pupil self-assessment. Pupils are able to improve their skills through evaluating their own and others' performance.

13. The special educational needs register includes many more boys than girls reflecting the gender imbalance on the school roll. Taking account of reviews of individual education plans, the achievement of specific targets and the quality of in-class support during observed lessons, most pupils with special educational needs make excellent progress and achieve at least as well as their peers, given their starting points and degree of learning difficulties. Some individual pupils have made particularly good progress since beginning their support programme.

14. Overall, almost 90 per cent of the school roll do not speak English as a mother tongue. Most pupils who are learning English as an additional language are not early stage learners, but nearly a sixth are. Progress is steady through Years 7 to 9 as their acquisition of English picks up pace. Achievement by the time they leave school is excellent with many achieving excellent GCSE results.

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

Pupils have a very strong desire to learn, achieve and gain the most they can from school. This is reflected in the levels of attendance, which are very good. The degree of racial harmony in the school is outstanding. Whilst there is some challenging behaviour in lessons, overall behaviour is good. The crowded playground leads to some confrontations at lunch and break times. The school's provision for the development of pupils' personal qualities - spiritual, moral, social and cultural - is very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Racial harmony is excellent and relationships overall are very good.
- Pupils are very enthusiastic about learning and value their education.
- Attendance is very good as a result of the school's very good procedures for following up non-attendance and promoting the importance of good attendance to all.
- Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good. Provision for spiritual and cultural development is good.
- Pupils are keen to take responsibility and enjoy making a contribution to the school.
- Many pupils enjoy taking part in activities outside school, particularly sports and revision clubs.
- Behaviour in most lessons is very good. However, in some lessons, pupils can be disruptive and disrespectful and some behaviour in the playground can be over- boisterous.
- Levels of short fixed period exclusions were high last year.

## Commentary

15. Pupils clearly enjoy school and their very positive attitudes to learning are a significant factor in their achievement. They are keen to work hard and gain the most they can from all the school has to offer. Year 8 pupils said that they see themselves as the future role models of the school and as such take responsibility for doing well. Many pupils spoke with great enthusiasm about the range of clubs and revision classes they attend. In addition, pupils speak highly of their teachers and their commitment to helping them. In response, they are generally enthusiastic in lessons and want to learn as much as they can. This was exemplified in a Year 7 design and technology lesson where pupils were quick to chide one of their classmates who was preventing the teacher from speaking.

16. Pupils' desire to be educated is reflected in their very good attendance. There are very few unauthorised absences and attendance in all year groups last year was high. The school has worked extremely hard to implement systems to promote and ensure good attendance. The majority of pupils are punctual to school and to lessons and there is a clear expectation of starting on time.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.7	School data	0.8
National data	7.2	National data	1.1

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

17. Pupils with positions of responsibility, such as form captains, prefects and school council representatives, show a high degree of awareness of their roles, which they undertake with enthusiasm.

18. Of particular note in the school is the degree of racial harmony which permeates the school. Many pupils, when asked what they thought was the school's greatest strength, referred to the way all groups of pupils get on and that the school celebrates the great cultural diversity of its pupils. This is evident in lessons and around the school where pupils from different ethnic groups work and play happily together. Indeed relationships between all members of the community are very good; pupils feel confident in talking to staff. The school is effective in promoting pupils' confidence and self-esteem.

19. Behaviour in nearly all lessons is good, and often very good, but there is a small number of pupils, particularly boys, who can be disruptive. These pupils do not always listen and in some lessons they distract others in the class with silly immature behaviour. This is particularly true where the teacher is less skilled at managing pupils. Teachers work hard to maintain good behaviour in lessons, which allows pupils to work hard and achieve well. A few pupils and a number of parents expressed some concern about behaviour. The number of short fixed period exclusions was high last year but is already significantly lower this term. There is also an element of rough behaviour in the playground, which is partly caused by the restricted space. Pupils spoke about being hit by footballs, for example. However, in the dining area and around the school, the majority of pupils behave well despite some crowded corridors. There is an element of bullying, which the school takes very seriously and pupils said it was quickly dealt with.

**Ethnic background of pupils****Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	34	5	0
White – Irish	4	0	0
White – any other White background	11	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	7	2	0
Mixed – White and Black African	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	6	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	9	6	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	294	17	1
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	164	23	2
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	203	33	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	15	1	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	28	9	0
Black or Black British – African	73	9	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	7	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	16	2	0
No ethnic group recorded	13	1	0

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

20. Pupils with special educational needs have positive attitudes to learning and generally behave well in class. They are appreciative of the support provided by special teachers and learning support assistants. However, a number of pupils are on the special needs register because they are identified as having social, emotional or behavioural difficulties. Staff have had training in behaviour management, including the use of methods of safe restraint.

21. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall. Pupils respond very well to the wide range of opportunities provided. Their spiritual development is good. Pupils' self-knowledge and spiritual awareness are supported well in several curriculum areas. The school recognises that many pupils bring with them a strong awareness of the significance of religion and the spiritual dimension in their lives. There is excellent support for spiritual development in religious education lessons where pupils are often receptive to the many opportunities to explore beliefs and their impact and significance. In personal and social education (PSE), pupils are expected to engage with challenging issues, such as racism and prejudice, with teachers always emphasising the question: 'What do *you* think?' Pupils share a distaste for racism, recognising that any form of discrimination is anathema to the school community as a whole. Assemblies do not contribute as strongly to pupils' spiritual development as they could. Pupils are not given time to reflect on the assembly focus and rarely have an opportunity to play an active role.

22. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. The school's values and expectations are well known and shared by most pupils. Pupils have a clear understanding of the principles that distinguish right from wrong. Most pupils understand and respect other people's feelings. Year 10 pupils studying a unit on Religion and Politics have recently visited the House of Commons to inform their understanding of the democratic process. All pupils explore moral and ethical dilemmas in religious education through the GCSE short course. The strong focus on moral

and social issues in PSE interests and motivates pupils. Year 10 pupils were so involved in a discussion on racism and the law based on the Stephen Lawrence case that they did not notice it was time for break! Year 9 pupils engaged with the issues of guilt, innocence and justice through a study of 'The Trial'. In art lessons, pupils discuss how artists have represented issues such as war and conflict. In drama, they study challenging issues, such as the role of women in the home and in war situations.

23. Provision for pupils' social development is also very good. The school gives high priority to ensuring that pupils understand and fulfil the responsibilities of living in a community. The school council is active and effective in ensuring that the views of pupils and adults are heard on issues, which affect the quality of life in the school and wider communities. Their excellent survey and report on the quality of school meals has led to some significant changes, improvements and innovations. Their involvement in the recent 'Racism must die' conference organised by the Borough of Newham signals clearly their support for the school's stance on racism. Social interaction through working in pairs and groups is very well supported in lessons in a number of subjects, including design and technology, religious education and languages. Many pupils enjoy taking part in a wide range of activities outside school, particularly sports and revision clubs.

24. Cultural development is good. The school encourages pupils to appreciate their own cultural traditions and those of others. In a Year 9 religious education lesson, Muslim pupils made a strong contribution as 'living resources' by supporting their peers in group work on the significance of the Five Pillars. Pupils are introduced to art from a wide range of traditions. In their music lessons, pupils listen to and perform music from a range of cultures including Asian music, such as Bollywood and 'fusion'. A Bhangra dance group provides good opportunities for girls to perform in a club after school. The school is sensitive to the needs of particular groups within its community, for example providing washing facilities for boys before Muslim prayers.

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

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. Teaching and learning are very good overall. The quality of assessment and the breadth of the curriculum are satisfactory. The school provides good care, guidance and support for its pupils. Links with parents are satisfactory, whilst those with the community are good.

### **Teaching and learning**

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning experienced by pupils is very good. This is because teaching and learning are rarely unsatisfactory and are good or better in the majority of lessons. Evidence from lesson observations, pupils' work and discussions with pupils and teachers shows that most of the characteristics of teaching and learning are very effective and result in pupils achieving highly by the end of Year 11. The quality of teaching and learning has improved significantly since the last inspection, where it was judged to be good. The quality of assessment, overall, is satisfactory. Whilst assessment responds well to individual needs, the quality varies between teachers and is not collated effectively to track pupils' progress.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Outstanding practice was observed in drama, physical education and religious education and very good teaching and learning in almost all other subjects and in all year groups.
- Learning is often fun. Pupils are self-motivated and achieve very well, because they acquire effective learning techniques.
- Teachers have very good command of their subjects and high expectations of pupils. They are keen to impart their enthusiasm for their subjects.
- Teachers use a variety of effective teaching strategies and stimulating activities, which encourage pupils to collaborate, discuss and question.
- Teaching and learning strategies promote equality of opportunity. A mix of partnership teaching, in-class support and withdrawal in small groups ensures individual pupils with learning or language needs receive effective, targeted support.

- The school has successfully adopted a range of strategies to improve the quality of teaching and learning and to support under-performing departments.
- Good assessment data is not used consistently to inform pupils what they need to do to improve, nor is it shared effectively across the school to track the progress of individuals and groups of pupils.

## Commentary

### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in [number] lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4 (3%)	34 (23%)	67(46%)	37(26%)	3(2%)	0 (0%)	0(0%)

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

25. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is very good. It is the amalgam of good, very good and outstanding experiences in lessons which makes it so. Outstanding teaching was observed in lessons in drama, physical education and religious education in Year 7 and drama in Year 9. The quality of teaching and learning was very good in the majority of lessons in French and physical education and a significant proportion in English, design and technology and music. Across the curriculum, some very good teaching and learning occurs in almost all subjects. Pupils rarely experience teaching which is less than good in English, mathematics, French, religious education, art, music, drama, physical education and some aspects of design and technology. The best teaching occurs in Years 7, 10 and 11, but the majority of teaching is at least good in all years. The only unsatisfactory teaching was seen in Year 8 design and technology and Year 9 ICT. A major strength of teaching and learning is the promotion of equality of opportunity and the inclusive style adopted in almost all lessons.

26. Teachers' command of their subjects is very good. Many have excellent up-to-date subject knowledge. In art, teachers use this well to prepare resources that effectively stimulate pupils' imagination. In French, the target language is consistently used as the principal means of communication. Many teachers are enthusiastic about their subject. In drama, the teacher's enthusiasm is infectious and real interest is shown in pupils' ideas. In history, teachers clearly want pupils to share their enjoyment of their subject. One teacher used a painting effectively to stimulate an animated discussion, in a Year 8 class, of what Henry VIII was like as a man. In a mathematics lesson observed, the teacher's thespian performances kept the pupils entertained as well as on task.

27. Teachers' planning is generally very effective. Most teachers engage very well with pupils and give them appropriate encouragement. Pupils indicated that 'teachers push you to do your best' and 'are patient.' Where a support teacher is present, planning for partnership teaching is often very effective. Teachers' expectations are generally high, providing very good challenge to pupils. In most lessons, whether the subject is taught to mixed ability classes or to groups set by ability, the needs of different groups of pupils are met very well. Most teachers know the needs and potential of pupils and organise tasks and groupings with some skill. Many teachers use whole- class and targeted questioning skilfully. For example, in mathematics, teachers' probing questions prompt pupils to explain their answers until they understand the concepts. Most teachers employ a range of strategies effectively for establishing positive behaviour, although a few have yet to acquire the skills to engage fully all pupils in classes with diverse learning needs.

28. Teachers use a very good range of teaching methods and activities. In most subjects, teachers adopt a consistent and carefully structured approach to lessons. Many have adopted effectively the three-part lesson as advocated in the National Key Stage 3 Strategy. They often, as in science, include lively starting activities, which engage pupils' interest, and plenaries, which check pupils' understanding. In the most effective lessons, teachers include several stimulating activities involving a mix of whole- class, group and individual work to keep all involved. Teachers very effectively use pupils' experiences and interests to enhance learning. For example, in religious

education, pupils' religious awareness is used well, as was their knowledge of migration in geography. Teaching is least satisfactory in lessons where the teacher's input dominates the lesson, with little opportunity for individual pupil initiative or independent work. In these lessons pupils become over-dependent on the teacher. In an art lesson, this was redressed successfully by placing a boy in the 'hot seat' to answer questions from his peers.

29. Teachers use resources and time effectively. In some subjects, such as English, teachers use very good resources produced 'in-house.' In physical education, pupils respond well to the effective use of resources. Pupils have the opportunity to use ICT to support their language learning and to carry out research in geography, for example. But ICT is not used consistently across all subjects. Homework is used with increasing effectiveness to reinforce and extend pupils' learning as they move through the school. It is set regularly, but is not always as challenging as it could be. Teachers in some subjects, such as mathematics and science, have developed extremely effective revision strategies, which substantially enhance pupils' performance between their mock and final examinations.

30. As pupils progress through the school, they acquire skills, knowledge and understanding with growing confidence. A characteristic across many lessons is that as well as serious learning occurring, lessons are fun. The style of teaching and learning adopted in most classes encourages pupils' active involvement in lessons. Pupils in Year 11 identified the adoption of such strategies, including a significant amount of practical and group work, as one of the reasons for the comparatively good achievement of boys in the school. Learning is sometimes excellent, where, as in drama, pupils are required to use a range of learning techniques including analytical reasoning and thinking skills. The emphasis in most lessons is effectively ensuring pupils' increasing understanding of the subject. Pupils are encouraged to discuss and to question. However, in geography, there is too much stress on content at the expense of developing subject concepts and practical skills.

31. Pupils' application and productivity is very good. Most are very keen to learn, put a good deal of effort into their work, are self-motivated and enjoy learning. However, a minority can be disruptive, restless and inattentive in some lessons. However, the school has good strategies to address this and such pupils are effectively challenged in most, but not all, classes. There is usually a good working atmosphere and most contribute well during lessons and produce a good amount of written work. Their capacity to work independently and collaboratively is very good. Teachers encourage collaboration. The atmosphere of mutual trust and respect created by teachers gives pupils in religious education, for example, the confidence to draw on their own faiths and beliefs so that pupils learn from each other as well as their teachers.

32. Teachers have detailed information about pupils' individual special educational needs and plan their lessons accordingly. Matching tasks and activities to pupils' prior attainment is a feature of the great majority of lessons seen. In-class support is generally well used throughout lessons, though ranges in quality from satisfactory to very good. It is invariably better when teaching assistants are used during whole-class work as well as with individuals, pairs or groups. Partnership teaching between subject teachers and SEN and EAL support staff works very well: it adds pace and variety to lessons; individual pupils receive effective targeted support; and teachers share expertise and skills, which benefits pupils' learning. The Learning Support Faculty (SEN and EAL) plays a full part in developing strategies to support pupils' learning, including providing training for subject teachers. Monitoring of pupils' performance by the special needs co-ordinator (SENCo) assists the early deployment of intervention.

33. The thoroughness and constructiveness of assessment is more varied. Whilst assessment is generally used well to respond to individuals' needs, it does not always aid pupils' understanding of how they could improve. There is no whole-school agreed method of assessment. Teachers in English, for example, mark thoroughly, but there are several systems of grading in operation within the department. Good assessment occurs in physical education, where pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own and others' performances to improve their skills. However, marking in many subjects provides insufficient feedback to pupils on how they are doing on a day-to-day basis and how to improve their work. Where there is feedback it is often too general, rather than subject



specific. Good assessment procedures have been developed recently in French, permitting accurate tracking of pupils' progress. However, the process of setting targets is not yet fully established. In contrast, assessment is good in art, where moderation between teachers is carried out well to ensure consistency and accuracy and records are used effectively. Teachers, in most subjects, do not use assessment consistently to monitor performance of different groups of pupils. The school provides departments with a substantial amount of data on pupils' performance in external examinations. Most departments record comprehensive data on pupils' progress. However, this is not co-ordinated in a coherent manner and not used as effectively as it could be.

34. Since the last inspection, a significant amount has been done to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Clear strategies for improvement have formed part of the school's development plan. Appropriate support is provided to under-performing departments, including thorough coaching for some unqualified teachers. Teamwork, which is apparent throughout the school, enables temporary teachers to perform effectively in most lessons. Well-managed monitoring procedures have been established in most departments. Professional development is seen as central to the development of individual teachers and the whole school. Various action research projects on, for example, thinking skills, accelerated learning and teaching styles for boys only groups, have informed teachers' practice and brought about improvements in pupils' learning experiences. At the time of the last inspection, teaching in 90 per cent of lessons was judged at least satisfactory and half good or better. The school's target of raising this to 95 per cent and 60 per cent respectively for this year was surpassed in the inspection, to 98 per cent and 72 per cent.

### **The curriculum**

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. It meets the broad statutory requirements, except that it does not include provision for an act of collective worship. Provision for enrichment is good. The match of teachers and support staff to the curriculum is good and the provision of resources is satisfactory. Accommodation is unsatisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school's accommodation is unsatisfactory and restricts pupils' achievement.
- Support for learning outside the school day is good, with very good provision and participation in sport and revision classes.
- Provision for personal, social and health education is good.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- The school has provided well for the National Key Stage 3 Strategy, supported by a good programme of staff development.
- Innovative approaches to the teaching of some subjects in Years 10 and 11 help pupils prepare for further study and the world of work, but there are no work-based, community-based or vocational courses.
- The timetabling of music and drama is unsatisfactory in all year groups.
- The school does not explore links between the teaching of French and community languages and the language choices of some pupils are restricted.
- The school deals effectively with recruitment and supports retention through a very good programme of staff induction.

### **Commentary**

35. The curriculum for pupils in Years 7 to 9 includes the full range of core and foundation subjects and religious education, as well as drama. In Year 9, pupils make choices within a fixed structure, which ensures that they continue to follow a broad and balanced curriculum, consisting of all the statutory subjects, including a language and a design and technology subject. All these courses lead to a GCSE qualification at the end of Year 11.

36. The school has introduced some flexibility into the curriculum in Years 10 and 11. For example, courses in business, design and technology and media studies contribute to pupils' insight into the world of work. The course in citizenship, taught as part of the personal, social and health

education programme, provides a good basis for pupils to acquire the skills and understanding for deciding on future pathways and further study. All pupils take half a GCSE in ICT in Year 10, enabling some to proceed to the full qualification in Year 11 if they choose to do so, but arrangements for the others are unstructured. A very small number of pupils take GCSE mathematics in Year 10, moving on to AS-level in Year 11. These initiatives go part of the way towards offering a coherent and flexible curriculum, providing continuity between the ages of 14 and 19, but no curricular links with providers of post-16 education are in place. The school has started to explore the Newham 14 to 19 Learning Standard, but has not yet introduced any vocational courses or alternative provision involving work-based or community-based courses.

37. Arrangements for sex and relationships education are good, supported by resources and training from the University of Exeter. A recent, detailed paper from Newham LEA provides additional support for the school in developing this aspect of the curriculum. The school's drug policy is satisfactory and includes a section on drug education, but the co-ordinator is not named, despite the central role defined in the procedures for this person.

38. Teaching of the creative and performance subjects, including design and technology, takes place in the Arts and Technology Centre. The location of the Centre is separate from the main school and this imposes timetabling limitations. An arrangement for teaching all these subjects in six-week blocks of time in Years 7 to 9 impedes continuity. The division of courses into two halves for older pupils, providing four periods per week in Year 10 and two in Year 11 or vice-versa, has a similar effect. Whilst these restrictions have little consequence for some subjects, they have a negative impact on achievement in others, especially music and drama. A general lack of curriculum time also affects performance in physical education and the school provides no dance education, except as an occasional enrichment activity.

39. In languages, after taking French in Years 7 and 8, some pupils have the choice of continuing with French or starting a course in Bengali, Gujarati or Urdu in Year 9, leading to GCSE at the end of Year 11. The opportunity to learn the three community languages is restricted to pupils who speak them already. All others are required to continue with French and no pupil has the opportunity to learn more than one language at school. Despite its multi-lingual environment and the bilingual background of many pupils, the school has developed no overall policy towards the teaching of languages other than English. Consequently their profile is low and the school misses opportunities to explore links and widen choice in order to improve performance in languages.

40. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Individual education plans are well presented and include a manageable number of appropriate targets and clear strategies to achieve them. They are reviewed at least every six months - often more frequently - and pupils have a say in determining whether their targets have been met. Pupils with special educational needs and those at an early stage of learning English as an additional language have access to the full curriculum. A mix of in-class support, partnership teaching, withdrawal and setting by ability within some subjects ensures these pupils receive their entitlement to a full curriculum. Good provision is made for those in Years 7 and 8 who are identified as requiring support to enhance their literacy skills.

41. The school keeps a register of gifted and talented pupils. There is a satisfactory range of activities that provide good opportunities for pupils to develop their talents. These include visits to specialist facilities. However, whilst information on these pupils is shared with departments, there is little evidence across subjects that teachers take this into account in their planning or delivery of lessons.

42. Several subject areas provide good opportunities for enrichment outside school hours and provision in sport is very good. In spite of very limited space, inter-house competitions take place at lunchtimes and physical education teachers provide several different activities after school. Pupils have good access to computers outside lessons and provision after school for many pupils in mathematics in Year 7 also enables them to increase their skills in ICT. The citizenship programme includes links with the community. The art department runs Saturday classes, a regular club during the week and occasional residential courses. The languages department provides opportunities to

travel and stay on short residential visits in France. The humanities departments, however, run few excursions.

43. The school has worked effectively to recruit and retain well-qualified teaching and support staff, with the result that pupils of all age groups have access to the full range of National Curriculum subjects. A well-planned induction programme gives staff who are new to teaching or new to the school an opportunity to develop their expertise and understand the particular needs of pupils at this school. One strength of this programme is that the staff who deliver it are experienced teachers within the school and have particular areas of expertise to offer. The session observed on improving boys' attainment was very good.

44. Accommodation is unsatisfactory overall. Within these difficult circumstances the school's achievements are remarkable. The school has done well to ensure that any detrimental impact on pupils' educational experience is minimised. The interior of some teaching areas, such as in the Arts and Technology Centre, science laboratories and ICT rooms, has been developed to provide a good learning environment. However, there are other areas that are poor. The Burness building appears to have reached the end of its useful life. The playground on the main site is too small for the number of pupils and inadequate for outdoor games in physical education lessons, so that useful learning time is lost in travelling to suitable facilities elsewhere. Interior decoration is unsatisfactory, despite the school's efforts, and especially those of the site manager and his staff, at a planned programme of maintenance and redecoration. The general condition of the exterior of both the main block and the arts and technology centre is tired and uninspiring for pupils being educated in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The staffroom is cramped, poorly furnished and shabby. Discussions with staff and pupils show that they are also unhappy about the condition of the building.

45. The LEA and school are currently exploring ways to provide the major investment needed. But, even if these plans are successful, it might be more than five years before any significant change is experienced by pupils. This means that none of the pupils currently in the school will benefit.

46. There are sufficient suitable resources available for the school to meet the needs of its curriculum. The library, although small, has enough suitable books to support pupils' learning satisfactorily. The use of available information and communication technology across the school is inconsistent and some software has not yet been made available to pupils. Some departments make good use of resources they have created themselves, such as art and history, and some use outside resources well, such as physical education and art.

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

Stratford is a caring school. It provides good support, advice and guidance to its pupils. It values and acts upon the views of pupils and encourages their involvement.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Support for pupils on a day-to-day basis is excellent. All pupils have a trusting relationship with one or more adults.
- The school council ably represents the views of pupils.
- Data on pupils' progress is shared effectively on academic review days and in annual reports, but is not collated centrally on a regular enough basis to enable form tutors to track progress throughout the year.
- Induction arrangements for pupils new to the school are good.
- Procedures for the assessment and annual reviews of pupils with special educational needs are good.
- Guidance on further study or career opportunities is sound, but resources for pupils to use to research potential careers are unsatisfactory.

## Commentary

47. The support given by the school on a day-to-day basis for pupils' personal needs is excellent. In the pupil questionnaire almost all were clear as to who they would turn to should the need arise. The school's pastoral system is well structured with form tutors closely monitoring pupils' pastoral development. Regular meetings take place with heads of year to identify pupils experiencing difficulties that may affect their learning or well-being. Form tutors are also involved in monitoring pupils' academic progress and in setting individual targets for improvement. These are shared with parents following academic review days and in annual reports. However, regular tracking of pupils' progress by pastoral staff cannot be undertaken systematically because the good assessment information held in most departments is not collated centrally.
48. Child protection procedures at the school are good and the child protection officer is well aware of her role. She has received recent training and has passed on information to other members of staff. There is useful information on this in the staff handbook. Records of pupils on the various registers, such as "at risk" and "looked after", are good, as is liaison with the LEA's Area Child Protection Committee. Internet access policies are known and understood and pupils report that they are adhered to.
49. There are no major health and safety concerns within departments and pupils work safely within school, despite the over-crowded conditions in the corridors and playground. The absence of safety catches on some windows was reported to senior managers during the inspection. The school has an adequate number of first-aiders and good records are maintained on the computer system of any accidents. Procedures for the administration of medicines are satisfactory.
50. The SENCo and heads of year regularly review the academic and social progress of pupils with special educational needs effectively. As a result, decisions about interventions are suitable. The support and guidance for pupils with special educational needs are good. Similarly, the progress of those for whom English is an additional language is reviewed regularly and support and guidance for them are good.
51. Pupils report that the induction they received in Year 7 was good. This was confirmed by parents. Two members of staff visit the main feeder schools to meet pupils prior to their admission and pupils who have selected the school are invited to an induction day. The school makes good efforts to ensure that Year 7 pupils feel secure in their early days at the school. They spend their first morning with their form tutors. A significant number of pupils enter the school at times other than the beginning of Year 7. Induction for them is also good.
52. Pupils' work is marked regularly, but whilst good advice is given in some subjects on how it can improve, there is some inconsistency between teachers.
53. More than half the pupils have the perception that their views are not listened to or acted upon. The school council has asked for more lockers, improved school meals, change of blazer colour and improved toilets. That there was action on all except blazer colour shows that outcomes are not made sufficiently clear to other pupils. The school council also showed considerable initiative by organising a survey on school meals. This was written up in a professional manner and distributed throughout the school.
54. Careers education and guidance are satisfactory with almost all pupils in 2002 going on to further education. There is a co-ordinated programme that provides guidance from Year 9 and again in Year 10 and 11, when visitors from Newham FE College and the University of East London provide advice on future pathways. Resources to enable pupils to research possible careers are meagre and uninspiring. The careers computer, for example, has not been working for more than nine months.

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

Links with parents are satisfactory overall. Although parents are supportive of the school they are not very involved in the life of the school beyond their own children's work. There are very good links with the local primary schools but links with other schools and colleges are less well developed. The school makes good use of the community to support teaching.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are very supportive of the school and their children's education, but few help in the school.
- The school works very closely with parents where there are concerns about individual pupils.
- Annual reports to parents are good, as is the use of Academic Review Days. However, there is little other information for parents on their child's progress throughout the year.
- There are good arrangements for helping parents to support their children taking GCSE examinations.
- Links with primary schools are very good; teachers regularly visit each other's schools and there are some innovative joint activities.
- The school has productive links with the community; there are many outside visits and visitors into school to enrich the curriculum. However, history and geography do not make good use of the community to support their teaching.
- The Governors' Annual Report to Parents is informative, but other information provided to parents about activities and the curriculum is brief and sometimes provided at short notice.
- Links with colleges are limited.

### **Commentary**

55. Parents are very supportive of the school and their children's education, although few help in the school. The vast majority of responses to the questionnaire sent to parents prior to the inspection and comments at the parents' meeting were positive. The school works very closely with individual parents when discussing particular concerns about behaviour or achievement. Individual departments send letters to parents celebrating good work. The annual reports generally give a good picture of the standards achieved by children but some of the targets for development are very general, for example, 'Continue to work hard'. Targets are discussed with pupils at academic review days. Apart from the reports, there is little formal regular information for parents as to how well their child is doing and this was expressed as a concern by a number of parents in responding to the questionnaire. The school does inform parents about day-to-day activities but sometimes insufficient notice is given to allow parents to plan and some of the newsletters are brief and very general. The Governors' Annual Report to Parents is an attractively produced and interesting document, which contains a lot of information, much of it written by pupils. There is good information for parents of Year 11 children about preparation for the examinations but very little for parents of children in Years 7 and 8 about the curriculum.

56. The school is very welcoming to parents and encourages them to make contact if they have any concerns. Parents responding to the questionnaire nearly all said they did feel comfortable in approaching the school. They feel that, in general, the school responds well to concerns and complaints and the provision that the school makes to answer their queries and concerns is good. Parents arriving on site without an appointment are seen by an appropriate member of staff. The school works well with parents to ensure very good attendance. Parents of pupils with special educational needs contribute appropriately to annual reviews of statements of need. The school translates some of the formal information into community languages but is aware that it needs to develop other initiatives to involve all parents in the school.

57. The school draws on the local community well to support their work. There are a number of visitors to the school. For example, members of Leyton Orient Football Club visit regularly to provide football coaching, which is much appreciated by the pupils. There are good links with musical groups and local authors and artists who come into school to work with the pupils. These visits help bring subjects alive, increase their relevance and motivate pupils to achieve. Pupils are

also taken on visits, both in and outside the school day. For example, pupils in art visit galleries. However, history and geography do not make good use of the community to support their teaching. Some links, such as the Newham Diversity Pathfinder Project, help pupils celebrate the wide diversity of cultural backgrounds present in the school. The school uses many local businesses to provide work experience and one business is working with a number of pupils on tele-mentoring. These links with business contribute to raising pupils' awareness of the world of work and provide additional support for certain pupils.

58. The arrangements for the transfer of pupils from primary school to Stratford School are very good. There are regular and close links with the local primary schools. A Saturday school for Years 5 and 6 from the local schools is being run by Stratford School using the shared staff resources of all the participating schools and the support of a London University student. Links with the local secondary sixth forms and the college are in place for transfer but there is little collaborative work involving the curriculum.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Stratford School is led and managed very effectively. The headteacher's strong and reflective leadership, dedicated to promoting the school's high ambitions, means that all pupils experience a very good education and many achieve good qualifications. The governing body contributes well to this ambition and governance of the school is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school is led very effectively: the headteacher, senior and middle managers, and all staff work effectively to realise the high aspirations they have for pupils.
- Staff and pupils are highly motivated because the school's leaders set high expectations of them and are excellent role models, with a very clear focus on raising achievement.
- The commitment of all in the school – the headteacher, staff, governors and pupils – to inclusion, promotion of equality and concern for the needs of individuals is excellent.
- The school is managed very well and in a way that values staff and pupils: successful teamwork motivates and ensures that the school achieves its vision.
- Self-evaluation is honest and reflective but is not always used thoroughly to help identify development priorities.
- Data analysis is used effectively to identify how well the school is performing but is not used as well to track the progress of individual pupils.
- Governors support the school very well and hold it to account for its work but they are not always as clear about its strengths and weaknesses.

### **Commentary**

59. Governance of the school is good overall. Governors are closely involved in helping to set the school's overall direction and bring expertise and professionalism to the governing body. As a result they provide a great deal of support to the school and to the head. The committees and full governing body work very effectively and provide appropriate challenge to senior managers. All statutory responsibilities are met, except in relation to the daily act of collective worship. The school has dispensation, which allows this to be replaced by a period of quiet reflection. This does not occur in all assemblies or tutor periods. Governors have a good understanding of most of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, particularly in relation to the accommodation, but are not always as clear about those related to the curriculum. Governors have been fully involved in the bid to become a specialist school. They are very clear about what they are looking for in appointing a new head teacher for the school: someone who will build upon the school's achievements. Governors play a very central role in setting the budget and now monitor expenditure carefully and regularly during the year.

60. Leadership at all levels is highly effective and management is focused on making sure that the school fulfils its ambitions. There is a strong ambition for all pupils to succeed at Stratford School. During his seven years in post, the head has led the transformation from an under-

subscribed poorly performing school to one which is popular and where achievement is high. An outstanding feature of the school is the commitment of all to inclusion, promotion of equality and concern for the needs of individuals. One of the characteristics of leadership is the shared sense of purpose of staff with key responsibilities. Consequently pupils do well and all are included in what the school has to offer. The school's strategic and operational planning illustrates how this ambition is used to set out a clear vision for the school and how this is to be achieved. The four-year strategic plan and two-year development plan, for example, set out clearly how it plans to achieve its aims. Subject development plans are based on the whole-school plan, ensuring that school priorities are reflected in those identified for departments. Another example, of how plans work together to realise the school's ambitions, is the ICT strategy. Again, this is well conceived and is already having a strong impact on improving pupils' ICT experiences and raising standards, although there is still some way to go to ensure that all subjects use ICT fully in their teaching programmes. Progress on the school development plan is kept under review by governors' committees and evaluated regularly by senior managers.

61. Overall, self-evaluation is thorough and the school has a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. Importantly, it has effective strategies for improvement. A good example of this is attendance. Already above average in 2000, as a consequence of effective strategies, attendance has continued to rise so that it is now well above average. There is also a thorough analysis of examination results, which is used effectively by senior managers in setting the priorities in subject development plans and in identifying how well the school is performing. The school, however, recognises that the results of self-evaluation need to be used more rigorously to inform the development planning process. Whilst data is used effectively in some departments to track the progress of individual pupils, it is not collated effectively across the whole school.

62. The strong sense of shared purpose is focused clearly on raising pupils' achievements and on how to ensure that this happens in practice. The arrangements for monitoring teaching and learning, for example, help to improve practice by providing targeted support, as well as giving senior managers an overview of quality across the school. The involvement of middle managers in this process enhances the impact further because it involves them into the whole enterprise of improvement. It is significant that teachers recognise that improving teaching and learning is central to maintaining high achievement and raising it further. That all, except two or three pupils, achieved GCSE passes in at least five subjects in the 2003 examinations is strong evidence of the success of the school.

63. Part of the reason for the strong sense of purpose is the way senior managers lead by example. They are excellent role models for other staff and pupils. All retain a teaching commitment, which is often for PSE. This ensures that senior managers have first hand knowledge and experience of pupils: however, it also gives the PSE programme a high status and this, in turn, is part of the way the school promotes its high aspirations for pupils' achievements. It is significant that the programme is well taught, contributes significantly to pupils' development and promotes the values of the school effectively.

64. One of the significant features of the school is the way that teamwork is successfully promoted. It is significant for a number of reasons. First, it promotes good standards of teaching: a particularly good example of this is partnership teaching, where teachers work together to ensure that appropriate support is given to all pupils in a class. Another is where teachers work together on developing courses or evaluating the success of a particular task. Second, teamwork ensures that all in the team have an interest in success and this clearly helps to establish the shared purpose and vision. Third, successful teamwork motivates staff because it enables senior managers to delegate responsibilities, thus giving them a stake in the success of the team. This is also one of the reasons for the effectiveness of middle managers: a shared vision, a clear understanding of responsibilities and the ambition to succeed which all promote consistency across the school.

65. The school functions very smoothly. This was commented on by parents and the great majority agreed that the school is run well. The difficulties of having some subjects housed in another building are dealt with well overall and in a way that minimises movement and avoids disruption. However, the time for taking registers in the morning and afternoon on the ATC site is

not used particularly well. On the other hand, the building provides a calm environment and pupils say that they enjoy having some of their lessons there. Management, overall, is particularly effective in creating a climate in which pupils make very good progress.

66. The school has a strong commitment to staff development. There is very good provision for the induction of new staff and there is a programme of meetings and professional discussion that are well received by teachers. There is a broad range of training opportunities for all teachers and a clear link to the school's priorities. Whole-school in-service sessions relate closely to those issues that have most impact on pupils' achievements: they include, for example, behaviour management, accelerated learning, ICT and target setting. The school's performance management procedures are very effective and contribute well to improvements. There is a strong involvement in the training of new teachers, including initial teacher training and graduate teacher programmes. The school manages the recruitment and retention of staff very well. The teachers and other staff of the school, as well as the pupils, are drawn from a diverse range of cultures. This is recognised by pupils as a strength of the school.

67. Leadership and management of learning support are good. Pupils are accurately identified and relevant information about them is made available to teaching staff at an early stage. Records are well kept and updated regularly. Provision throughout the school is well managed and good use is made of resources.

68. Good quality guidance is produced for subject teachers on teaching and learning strategies for pupils with English as an additional language. As a result, these pupils make at least satisfactory progress even during lessons when subject teachers are not supported in class by specialist staff.

69. Financial management is very efficient and effective. Spending decisions relate well to the school's overall priorities. The school spends relatively more than other schools in London. This is partly because the school receives additional funding for pupils with special educational needs, because of the LEA's inclusion policy. The school lives within its means, despite greater challenges this year in balancing its budget. However, it predicts that it will be able to set a balanced budget for the next financial year. Best value principles are used for purchasing equipment and materials and the school has taken direct responsibility for cleaning and catering. This is both cost effective and enables the school to be flexible in deploying some of its support staff. It is a good example of how the school achieves best value.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	3,957,159
Total expenditure	3,869,261
Expenditure per pupil	4,362

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	(44,436)
Balance carried forward to the next	87,898



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

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

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

#### **English**

Provision in English is **good**.

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

- Standards are below average in Year 9 but average by Year 11.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and achieve very well by the time they leave school, given their low levels of prior attainment on entry.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Leadership and management are good.
- Although marking is thorough, systems of grading are inconsistent.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good.

#### **Commentary**

70. Standards in Year 9 are below average, but are not as low as the 2003 National Curriculum test results indicate. These results were not in line with those of other core subjects or with English results in previous years. But there is no doubt that many pupils in Years 7 to 9 have limited language skills in English, in writing in particular. A significant number enter the school at an early stage of learning the language, and almost 90 per cent do not speak English as their first language. They, in fact, achieve well by the time they reach Year 9, given their low levels of prior attainment.

71. Pupils also achieve well in Years 10 and 11, and by Year 11 their standards are in line with national averages overall. GCSE results in 2003 showed a marked improvement on the previous year. Results, in terms of the proportion of pupils achieving grades A\*-C, are close to the national average in English and above the national average in English literature. All pupils are entered for both subjects and almost all reach at least a grade G in each.

72. The progress made by pupils from the time they join the school in Year 7 up to Year 11 is due, in part, to their very positive attitude to learning. It is also due to the good, often very good, teaching they receive. Teaching is just as good in Years 7 to 9 as it is in Years 10 and 11, but its impact is not reflected in results. The National Curriculum tests for 14-year-olds, as currently constituted, are not suited to many pupils at this school, whose progress over the first three years does not show up in the kinds of writing that are tested. But they are nevertheless achieving well, and a foundation is laid for subsequent success in Year 11, by which time their competence in English is more assured. Year 11 pupils are capable of writing at some length, often with some accuracy, for a variety of purposes. Many lack confidence in speaking aloud in front of others, but they are good listeners. Their level of reading comprehension is also reasonably sound.

73. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen during the inspection. Almost all was good, even very good. A particularly effective feature is the 'partnership' teaching that is used for several classes, where the class teacher is supported by a teacher with expertise in special needs, allowing the lesson to move at a brisker pace without any pupils missing out. These lessons are particularly well planned, but most lessons are characterised by very good planning and the use of some very good resources produced 'in-house'. There are high expectations of pupils, with some challenging work being set. The needs of different groups of pupils are very well met, whether or not there are support staff present. Teachers know the needs and potential of their pupils, and organise tasks and groupings with some skill, so all are working at an appropriate level. Teachers mark thoroughly, although there seem to be several systems of grading in operation at the moment, and only a limited amount of formative assessment. Homework is set regularly, and any failure to complete is followed

up well, but some homework tasks could be more challenging than they are. The general picture, however, is one of good teaching and learning, with very good relationships between teachers and pupils.

74. The department is well led and managed. The head of English has very clear ideas about where the department is going; reorganisation of the curriculum and teaching groups has been done very effectively, in order to maximise learning opportunities. Detailed schemes of work and very good teaching materials enable all teachers, however experienced, to teach more effectively. Staff with senior responsibilities do not all have their own teaching rooms, but the spaces available are used well. Paper resources, such as the high quality workbooks, are more in evidence than hardware, and ICT is relatively underused, although where it is used, for example in the designing and printing of book covers, standards are high. The subject makes a good contribution to the social development of pupils through the amount of group work where they are expected to work with pupils of different ability, gender or background from themselves.

75. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection. The quality of teaching and learning remains good, and provision for special needs has improved. Standards generally have risen, reflected particularly in the 2003 GCSE results.

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

76. Pupils join this school with language skills well below average, because of a limited knowledge of English, and this impacts on their learning for at least the first three years they spend at the school. They lack confidence in speaking audibly in class, although they listen well. Their reading skills are better than their writing skills, although writing improves significantly while they are at the school.

77. Teachers are aware of the needs of the pupils, and apply good strategies for enhancing literacy. An effective policy has been applied for several years. Year 7 pupils have a literacy lesson each week, taken by their English teacher or another specialist, and there are progress units for small groups of pupils who are withdrawn from other classes for three 20- minute sessions each week. These are replaced in Year 8 by a 'Reading Challenge' scheme, involving one-to-one work at lunchtime or after school. In various subjects, starter activities have a literacy focus, and many teachers provide pupils with helpful frameworks for writing. Good examples of this were seen in geography and in personal, social and health education, as well as in all English lessons. Teachers explain key words and correct mistakes. Several teachers are familiar with community languages and are able to give extra support to particular pupils. Younger pupils make good use of the school library.

### **French**

Provision in French is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Attainment in GCSE has improved every year since the last inspection.
- Teaching is good overall and much is very good, with well- planned lessons and well-managed resources.
- The department's leadership and management have the capacity to ensure continued improvement.
- Good assessment procedures are being developed, but staff do not analyse data sufficiently.
- There is no link between the teaching of French and the community languages.
- ICT is included in the schemes of work and pupils use it to support their learning, but its potential is not fully exploited.

## Commentary

78. The improvement in GCSE results continued in 2003 and they exceeded the school's target for French by a wide margin, but remained below the national average. Boys' results were worse than girls' even when the national difference was taken into account. Standards seen in lessons are in line with national averages and this indicates that results can continue to improve. Pupils make good progress in Years 10 and 11. Teachers support those with special needs well through good planning and carefully graded work, enabling them to achieve as well as the others. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress. All pupils are starting to organise their work carefully and achievement is good. Attainment at the end of Year 9 in 2003 was also below average, with boys doing a little better than girls in relation to the national averages. As in Years 10 and 11, standards seen in lessons are average overall and, in the case of some high attaining pupils, above average. This also represents good achievement, which means that pupils' achievement overall is very good.

79. Overall, teaching is good, although in the individual lessons observed it was generally very good. Teachers have a consistent approach to lessons: they all use French as the principal means of communication, set clear, simple objectives, use familiar routines and plan well for a systematic build up so that pupils learn to use complex sentences in the course of most lessons. Teachers have high expectations and employ a range of strategies effectively for establishing discipline. They contribute skilfully to the school's policy on literacy, but independent reading material is not freely available in classrooms and provision in the library is unsatisfactory. Pupils have the opportunity to use ICT to support their language learning and schemes of work contain many references to this, but they do not make use of the French language dictionary and grammar check. Good assessment procedures have been developed recently, permitting accurate tracking of pupils' progress. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 know their attainment level and, in Years 10 and 11, their target minimum grade. The most able can describe what they need to do in order to improve. The process of setting targets is not yet fully established and staff do not use assessment to monitor the performance of different groups of pupils, for example, that of ethnic minorities or boys.

80. The department is well led. There is a clear vision, focusing on raising attainment, and the head of department provides a good role model for other staff. Management is good: comprehensive new schemes of work are in place and a good start has been made on establishing procedures through a new departmental handbook, though some gaps remain. The department is now building central records of the progress made by all pupils, but does not yet analyse data sufficiently. The development plan is good, but contains no section on improving boys' attainment. There are also no plans for linking the teaching of French with the teaching of other languages in the school, even though these are offered as options against French and many pupils are bilingual. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. Attainment and progress are much better than they were because teaching has improved and the department is well placed to continue to move forward.

## Community languages

Provision in community languages is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision reinforces the school's commitment to a broad curriculum in languages, which recognises the value of linguistic diversity.
- The school has demonstrated a great capacity for self-analysis and improvement in the provision in community languages.
- Leadership supports the raising of standards, but there is no link between the teaching of French and community languages.
- Teachers are committed and linguistically competent, but do not always have the skills to manage more challenging pupils or to deliver a quality education to pupils effectively.
- The lack of a base area for community languages not only detracts from the school's commitment to these languages but impacts adversely on teaching and learning.

## Commentary

81. Standards in community languages overall were average in the lessons observed. Past results, however, are below average. Pupils' speaking is generally good and their grasp of vocabulary and grammatical structures is developing appropriately. As they progress from Year 9 to Year 11, pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall but a few pupils, including, in particular, those with special educational needs, do not always make sufficient progress. By the age of 16, most pupils can comprehend and manipulate complex structures, involving a wide range of vocabulary. Their knowledge of the relevant cultures and histories is also sound. However, in general, pupils' written work does not always match their relatively advanced spoken language skills.

82. Teaching in community languages is satisfactory overall, with examples of good or very good practice. Teachers are caring, supportive and enthusiastic. They have made great efforts to acquire the essentials of sound teaching practice. These include: careful planning of schemes of work, preparation of lesson plans, use of assessment and recording of pupils' successes, and an increasing awareness of the needs of individual pupils, particularly in a mixed ability class. Teachers' class management skills sometimes prove inadequate to the diverse learning needs of a mixed ability group. Also, their teaching and learning strategies to engage and involve all pupils during an entire lesson are still developing. The use of ICT in the teaching and learning of community languages was a weakness at the time of the last inspection and it remains so.

83. Pupils' learning is satisfactory overall. Relationships are generally good. Mostly, pupils respond appropriately, co-operate with others and complete homework well. Consequently, their progress in lessons and over time is generally satisfactory. Overall, pupils are committed to the community language they study. However, a few examples of disengagement and disruptive behaviour were noted in some of the lessons observed. Pupils' ability to undertake sustained and purposeful language learning activities during lessons is sometimes limited because their ability to work independently has not been developed effectively.

84. The very good quality self-analysis and subsequent management initiatives have led to a significant overall improvement in the community languages provision at the school since the last inspection. The leadership of the community languages programme is very effective. As a result, a generally consistent approach to teaching community languages across the school has developed, with detailed schemes of work, a system for assessment and record-keeping, and preparation of relevant teaching materials. The current profile of community languages in the school nevertheless remains unremarkable, which impacts not only on pupils' self-esteem but also on the levels of their commitment to the languages they study. Moreover, the present management structure for languages, with no link between European and community languages, offers inadequate coherence, support, supervision and development across the whole languages curriculum.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement in mathematics is excellent.
- Standards by Year 11 in the 2003 GCSE examinations were well above the national average; the school exceeded its target.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- The head of the mathematics department provides very good leadership and management.
- The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented well.
- Practical and visual methods are used insufficiently to support learning.

## Commentary

85. The mathematics department is successful because all members of the department are highly committed to promoting pupils' achievement and good standards. Good teaching has a positive impact on learning because teachers' exposition and discussions are based on good subject knowledge combined with well-structured tasks. They also have a very clear focus on the pupils' learning needs and establish good working relationships with them. Standards seen in lessons and work samples in Year 9 are below the national average and are broadly average by Year 11. There is no significant difference in the achievement of different groups of pupils. The department has made good improvements in standards since the last inspection. Standards in the Year 9 national tests of 2003 were average but very high in relation to similar schools. By Year 11 the proportion of pupils gaining grades A\* - C at GCSE in 2003 was well above the national average and the proportion of the higher grades A and A\* was a particular strength. This exceeded the department's target significantly and was very high in relation to schools having similar results when their pupils were in Year 6 and in relation to schools having a similar proportion of free school meals. Overall, therefore, pupils demonstrate good achievement in Years 7 - 9 and very good achievement in Years 10 - 11, resulting in excellent achievement at GCSE, given standards when they first enter the school.

86. There is a wide spread of attainment on entry to the school. Standards are well below average overall in Year 7. Over one third of pupils attain below the expected level although the proportion exceeding it is average. Standards in the work seen are below average in Year 9. However, this represents good achievement. It is achieved because all teachers give very thorough explanations and they reinforce the ideas and skills to establish understanding. By Year 9 students have gained a good range of skills. Their skills of mental calculation and numeracy are generally satisfactory. They have a basic understanding of place value and decimal fractions; of simple algebraic steps such as collecting like terms; and of the properties of shapes. There are several aspects that are not yet established, however, particularly those requiring manipulation of algebra. For example, several average and higher attaining students confuse addition and multiplication notation in algebra. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is also good overall and, as observed in one lesson, teachers sometimes speak to students requiring further explanations in their home language.

87. Standards are average by this stage of Year 11, indicating further good achievement from Year 9. In a lesson in Year 10 for lower attaining pupils the teacher's good interactive approach encouraged good participation so that pupils made good gains in learning about how to order decimal numbers. However, there is a significant degree of confusion in the pupils' understanding of algebra. Pupils in an average attaining class in Year 10 demonstrated a basic understanding of how to draw linear graphs although many made slips in calculating the tables or plotting the points. By Year 11 pupils have broadly average standards in the work seen. In a lesson for the average attaining pupils, the teacher's good exposition about factorisation of quadratic expressions, emphasising the need to look for factors, led to mostly correct solutions. In a further lesson in Year 11 with the higher attaining pupils they gained good understanding of the method for completing the square in an algebraic expression because of the teacher's very good interactive style. Overall, the consistently good teaching has a cumulative impact on pupils' learning so that they make much more than average progress through the school. Evidence, from work seen, shows that standards improve significantly during pupils' time in the school. There is also evidence, which suggests pupils revise very effectively and improve their attainment significantly during the second half of Year 11 after their mock examinations.

88. The quality of teaching is good overall, and ranges from satisfactory to very good. This indicates an improvement since the last inspection and is partly as a result of well-managed monitoring procedures established by the head of department in consultation with members of the school's senior management team. Teachers engage well with pupils to promote active learning. Some teachers have particular strengths in pursuing a line of questioning until the idea is understood. For example in a Year 7 class, the teacher's probing questions prompted pupils to explain their answers about the mean or mode of a set of numbers. On a few occasions, teachers use simple equipment to illustrate ideas. However, the use of practical or visual methods is an area

for further development generally. The teachers' very good subject knowledge is applied to good effect during explanations. There is usually a good level of challenge for pupils of all levels of attainment. Teachers set suitable homework regularly.

89. All teachers have high expectations for work and behaviour. Many pupils, but not all, are self-motivated and want to succeed. There is usually a good working atmosphere, although a few pupils are restless and inattentive. On a few occasions teachers have to work very hard to maintain pupils' concentration and there is some variation in how inattention is managed that would benefit from departmental discussion. In general, pupils' good attitudes towards work and their behaviour act as positive influences on achievement. Most contribute well during lessons and produce a good amount of written work. The lower attaining pupils require continual support and encouragement. In a low attaining set in Year 10, for example, the teaching assistant provided thoughtful and perceptive support through helpful interactions with many pupils. This was in addition to the teacher's thespian performances, which kept the pupils on task as well as entertained.

90. The head of the mathematics department provides very good leadership and management. The curriculum structure for the subject is good and has improved well since the time of the last inspection. The National Numeracy Strategy in Years 7-9 is implemented well and is having a good impact on learning. Teachers use national guidance and lesson plans effectively to provide structure and progression through mathematical topics, revisiting them to build on previous work and adapting national guidance appropriately. There are a few examples of the application of ICT skills to mathematics, such as in the use of spreadsheets. Curriculum and lesson planning is good. There is a good selection of more open investigational work which provides good challenge for the pupils, although the teaching approach best suited to these tasks was not observed to be applied very much within non-investigational lessons. The department has responded well to the weaknesses identified at the time of the last inspection. Teachers give good attention to providing work matched to the differing needs of pupils, particularly in giving extension work to higher attainers. The marking of pupils' work is done carefully with several comments on how to improve, although these comments are not given consistently and seldom indicate the pupil's level of attainment for a piece of work. There are good assessment procedures, with detailed information on the regular tests, and these are used very well to track pupils' progress and to set them targets. The stock of text books is barely adequate and needs replenishing. While the accommodation is satisfactory overall, the ceiling in the ground floor external building is in poor condition.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

91. The skills of mathematics and numeracy are applied suitably in other subjects. For example, pupils draw graphs in science, make measurements in design and technology and use data in ICT. There are informal discussions between members of staff but there are seldom planned links between mathematics and other subjects.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Excellent achievement in GCSE examinations.
- A very effective revision programme.
- The head of department provides a very good role model for the department.
- Effective systems are in place for teachers to share good practice.
- Limited opportunities for science activities outside the classroom to enrich the curriculum.
- Results are not analysed by ethnicity to ensure that all groups are achieving well.
- Well-structured lessons designed to maintain pupils' interest, though not all teachers manage this consistently well.

## Commentary

92. Pupils start school with standards well below the national average. At the end of Year 11 standards attained at GCSE are well above average. This represents excellent achievement overall. In 2003, results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 were just below average, but this also represents good achievement given pupils' prior attainment. During the inspection the standards of work seen were below average in Year 9 and in line with the national average in Year 11. Evidence from last year's mock examinations suggests pupils revise very effectively and improve their attainment significantly during the second half of Year 11.

93. Overall, teaching and learning are good. Although much is very good, the quality has been affected during the Autumn term by the need to cover for legitimate staff absences. Teachers produce well-planned lessons that have a clear structure and include starters to engage pupils' interest and plenaries to check on their understanding. In the most effective lessons, teachers include several stimulating activities that involve all of the pupils. For example, in one starter activity pupils enjoyed using 'True' or 'False' cards to show their response to a series of questions devised by their teacher. The activities have pace and there is an obvious change between one activity and another so that pupils remain interested and on task. In less effective lessons, pupils are more passive because most of the activities are led by the teacher and there is little variety for them. Pupils have a good attitude to their studies and settle quickly when the activity is interesting and challenging. Support teachers are effective in helping pupils with special educational needs or English as an additional language gain full access to the lesson. Teachers prepare pupils for their GCSE examinations extremely well with an effective revision programme, of which Year 11 pupils take good advantage. Science technicians provide very good support to teachers and pupils by the efficient provision of resources for lessons.

94. Leadership and management are very good. The head of department is a very good role model. She is a very effective teacher with a calm, well-organised approach to her work. She is aware of the strengths and weaknesses of her department and is developing effective systems to promote the achievement of pupils. For example, she has helped raise pupils' examination performance by issuing each pupil with a useful revision guide and organising a well-structured revision programme. She has created a good working ethos for her team. Teachers share good practice regularly through lesson observations and departmental workshops. A well-planned and appropriate scheme of work has been produced that includes lesson plans, which are comprehensive in the main. However, there is scope for more detail in some of the plans to support inexperienced teachers more effectively. There is a common structure to lessons but not all teachers follow it closely enough, which reduces the impact of their teaching.

95. Teachers mark books regularly and some often give comments that will help pupils improve their work. There is also regular testing and pupils keep a record of their performance levels and target grade. Full records of test results help teachers monitor the progress of pupils and the head of department monitors the performance of boys and girls. However, the progress of different ethnic groups is not yet analysed.

96. Due to staffing difficulties the science club is no longer operating and there is a limited range of trips planned so that enrichment of the curriculum is currently unsatisfactory. Links with primary schools are being developed and the department is represented at meetings and workshops for secondary and primary teachers.

97. Science resources are adequate, although there is a shortage of large physics items and textbooks for use in class by younger pupils. Accommodation, in good-sized, recently refurbished laboratories, provides a safe and suitable working environment. The decoration is looking worn but displays of pupils' work help to create more stimulating surroundings. There is limited storage and preparation space, which makes the technicians' work more difficult and makes some laboratories look untidy.

98. Improvement since the last inspection is good. Pupils' progress is better and the lower attaining ones are now supported more effectively in lessons.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- The quality of planning is very good, except for non-examination pupils in Year 11 where it is unsatisfactory.
- The leadership and management of the department are good.
- Good use is made of National Curriculum level descriptors to assess pupils' work.
- The department has good resources that improve learning opportunities.
- On-going information to pupils on how they are progressing in the subject is inadequate.
- The use of ICT is not being planned for effectively in many subjects across the curriculum.

### Commentary

99. By the end of Year 9, standards are just above average and although teacher assessment figures since 2001 indicate a slight fall, evidence from the inspection does not bear this out. The reason for this small difference is that the department is now much better in assessing pupils' work.

100. Standards in Year 10 are above average. All pupils take the short GCSE examination at the end of Year 10 and the results show that standards are continuing to improve. This is as a result of improved planning and organisation of the course. Over the last three years there has been little difference in the standards attained by boys and girls and pupils with special needs make good progress. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection.

101. Overall, achievement is good. Pupils work confidently with a wide range of software applications and are doing better than could have been expected. In Year 11 pupils' work is of a good standard but an opportunity is missed to extend the learning of pupils not doing the full GCSE course. There is too little emphasis on improving pupils' literacy and numeracy through ICT. In only one lesson were pupils expected to read out their work and to focus on their grammar.

102. Teaching and learning are good overall. This is a result of good planning and good teacher knowledge of ICT that enables lessons to be presented in a way that ensures good learning opportunities. Lessons always start with pupils seated at the central tables where objectives and procedures are made clear. Aspects of the National Key Stage 3 ICT Strategy are being introduced and these are making a positive contribution to teaching and learning by improving pupils' interest and in developing a sharper focus for learning. In a few instances there is a weakness in the management of small groups of pupils and the use of assessment to inform pupils on how they are doing on a day-to-day basis is underdeveloped.

103. The management and leadership of the department are good. Planning is very good and there are effective schemes of work for Years 7 to 9 that are being modified to take into account the Key Stage 3 National Strategy for ICT. However, planning for the non-examination pupils in Year 11 is unsatisfactory. There is an effective monitoring system that is contributing to the improvement in teaching and learning. Very good progress has been made in resolving issues raised in the previous inspection.

### Information and communication technology across the curriculum

104. This is satisfactory. There is evidence of an increasing use of ICT in other subjects and there is good use in design and technology and geography and good evidence in displays of work in English. However, for community languages, history and mathematics the use of ICT to extend pupils' learning is unsatisfactory. Lack of use is mainly as a result of ICT not being planned for and this is made more difficult because there is very little subject specific software. Out of lesson time, pupils have good access to computers.



## HUMANITIES

### Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 11 are below those they achieve in most of their other subjects.
- Pupils display good literacy skills, both oral and written, and are supported by good use of writing frames.
- Classroom management is effective.
- Good use is made of open-ended tasks to enable all pupils, whatever their ability, to achieve.
- Effective use is made of ICT for geographical research.
- Too little emphasis is placed upon developing geographical concepts and the use of practical activities, especially map work and field work, is limited.
- The use of assessment to track pupils' progress is inconsistent.

#### Commentary

105. Standards overall are below average at the end of both Years 9 and 11. GCSE examination results in 2003 showed a fall on previous years. Standards in lessons and in pupils' work are good in Year 7 but by Year 10 they are below average. There are few opportunities provided to enable more able pupils to achieve at higher levels as standardised worksheets are used too much. However, pupils display good literacy skills, both oral and written. Their writing is supported by good use of writing frames. There are no significant differences in the standards attained by pupils of different ethnic backgrounds. However, although achievement by Year 9 is satisfactory overall, it is unsatisfactory by the end of Year 11.

106. Teaching overall is satisfactory. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Classroom management is good. Where teaching is most effective, teachers are knowledgeable and have an enthusiasm for the subject. They often personalise issues, so motivating pupils to learn, as in the case of a lesson on local migration in Year 8. Teaching is less effective where teacher input dominates lessons with little opportunity for individual pupil initiative or independent work. Some lessons lack pace and challenge and the work is superficial with too much stress on content rather than developing specific geographical concepts or practical skills. Marking is up to date but there is insufficient assessment or informative feedback with clear directions to help pupils improve their work.

107. The quality of learning is satisfactory for average attaining pupils. Where teacher expectations are high, more able pupils have opportunities to achieve at a higher level and, some, do so. Pupils show geographical knowledge and understanding in lessons, and appreciate a wide range of physical and human geography interactions, such as in work in a Year 11 lesson on the effects of hurricanes. A greater range of data sources would encourage more independent thinking and develop geographical skills including numerical and map work skills. However, effective use is made of ICT for geographical research. In discussions most pupils are confident and contribute well, showing considerable geographical understanding. For example, a pupil in Year 7 gave a very clear summary of the causes of flooding in Bangladesh.

108. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons are good. They are keen to learn and respond well to the demands made on them. Pupils listen attentively and concentrate for extended periods of time. Most pupils enjoy the subject and value its contribution to their knowledge of the world and the environment.

109. The head of department recognises the appropriate priorities for the development of the subject and is working hard to raise standards but it is too early to see an impact of these recent

developments. Assessment needs to be better developed to track pupil progress. Since the last inspection standards at GCSE have fallen and many of the problems previously identified persist, such as the heavy reliance on worksheets. However, there has been an improvement in the use of computers for research and standards in the lower school have risen significantly.

## History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement overall is good.
- The department is making a determined effort to improve standards of literacy for pupils by the end of Year 11.
- Teachers work effectively in partnership with support teachers in their classrooms.
- The marking of pupil work is inconsistent.
- There are accurate processes for assessing the progress of pupils. However, assessment information is not analysed at departmental level. Departmental monitoring processes are underdeveloped.
- The structure for planning lessons in three parts in Year 7 is effective, but is not used in other years.
- Schemes of work do not incorporate the planned use of ICT to enhance pupils' learning.

### Commentary

110. Standards of attainment in history are slightly below the national average at the end of Year 9. However, achievement is satisfactory as pupils develop their historical skills from Year 7. By the end of Year 9 they are able to understand cause and effect, interpret evidence and present a coherent argument.

111. GCSE results at the end of Year 11 in 2003 were below average. 42 per cent of pupils gained grades A\*-C compared with the national average of 59 per cent. This was in contrast to the two previous years. In 2002, results equalled the national average and in 2001 were well above when 71 per cent attained grades A\*-C. Standards of attainment by the end of Year 11 are satisfactory. In 2003, pupils achieved slightly lower grades in history than in their other GCSE subjects. During Years 10 and 11 pupils develop a range of historical skills. A Year 11 class examined a range of sources on rationing during World War II. They were able to identify the use and purpose of a number of written sources and pictures. They were critical of the sources and could recognise reliability, bias and typicality. Pupils understand that historians interpret the past in different ways. Overall, this represents good achievement given pupils' prior attainment and literacy skills on entry to the school.

112. Teachers are committed to their subject and have a good understanding of the nature of history. They want pupils to share their enjoyment of their subject. A Year 8 class became animated when they discussed a painting of Henry VIII to consider what he was like as a man. Teaching and learning in Years 7, 8 and 9 is satisfactory, with some good practice. There are well-established classroom routines to allow for the prompt start to lessons. Pupils like history and generally work well in lessons. However, some classes are noisy when undertaking group work and this means that they complete less work than would be possible in a more orderly atmosphere. The planning of lessons into three parts in Year 7 to introduce and consolidate learning is effective. Lessons with other year groups would benefit from a similar structure. Good resources support pupil learning. The best lessons for Years 7 to 9 have pace and pupils engage in a range of activities.

113. Teaching and learning in Years 10 and 11 are satisfactory, with some very good practice. Well-planned resources that meet the individual needs of pupils enable them to engage in focused activities and give some lessons pace. A Year 10 class exploring why the Nazis altered their strategy during the 1920s extended their understanding through very effective questioning by their

class and support teachers. They were helped to reconsider and revise their initial conclusions. The department is making a determined effort to improve standards of literacy for pupils by the end of Year 11. It has produced a number of well-planned resources to help pupils gather information and structure their written work and these are beginning to have a positive impact.

114. There are effective assessment processes to record pupils' progress for all years. Teachers use information effectively to guide their individual planning. However, marking is inconsistent. Insufficient attention is given to setting targets to improve pupils' learning. There is little correction of grammar and spelling. There is no clear statement of standards achieved by pupils in their work. Homework is set regularly but its completion needs to be monitored more closely.

115. Management is satisfactory. There is an effective job share between two heads of department. They have clearly defined responsibilities for the organisation and planning of different parts of the curriculum. Their positive relationship allows for effective communication and co-ordination. There are good links with support staff. This is helping to improve the quality of pupils' written work. Assessment is accurate but the results are not collated at departmental level. The marking policy is inadequate. Monitoring processes need further development.

116. There has been satisfactory progress since the last inspection. The quality of teaching has made a steady improvement, in line with pupils' achievement. The resources for the department have improved in quality and quantity. They are making an important contribution towards improving the standards of pupils' written work. ICT is still underdeveloped within the curriculum.

## **Religious Education**

Provision in religious education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is knowledgeable and challenging and this results in good learning for pupils.
- Teachers recognize and value the high level of religious awareness and the experiences which many pupils bring with them. They build on these in their teaching, both successfully and sensitively.
- Religious education lessons provide excellent support for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Setting subject specific targets, against which pupils' progress can be measured, is an area for further development.

### **Commentary**

117. There has been a considerable improvement in standards in religious education since the last inspection. Standards by Year 11 are now in line with national averages and meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. All pupils in Years 10 and 11 follow either a GCSE short course or full course. GCSE results for 2003 showed a significant improvement on the previous year with 56 per cent of pupils achieving grades A\*-C and nearly all pupils achieving grades A\*-G. Pupils' performance in religious education compares favourably with their results in other subjects. By the end of Year 11, pupils are able to evaluate religious views on a range of important moral and social questions, such as religion and medical ethics. In Year 10, pupils can identify sources of moral authority and present arguments for and against religious people being involved in politics. They showed a good understanding of the impact which the teachings of inspirational people can have through devising interviews with some key religious figures.

118. By Year 9 pupils' attainment in religious education is at least at the level expected by the locally agreed syllabus. In Year 7 and Year 9 many pupils are exceeding this expectation. This is because teachers have high expectations of them and they rise to the challenge. Year 7 pupils tackled the cosmological argument for the existence of God with relish, exploring the concept of cause and effect and discussing the idea of power in pairs and small groups. One group concluded

that 'no human could have as much power as God.' Their previous work on the 'design' argument showed that their capacity to evaluate and reflect on different opinions is very well developed.

119. Achievement is good for the majority of pupils in all years. Occasionally, the poor attitudes and behaviour of a few pupils limit learning, despite teachers doing all they can to help pupils' learning, by consistently reinforcing their expectations. However, most pupils work to their capacity, showing interest in the subject matter, increasing their knowledge and developing their ideas. The well-planned support for pupils who are learning English as an additional language ensures they make good progress and participate fully in lessons.

120. The quality of teaching is good and this results in good learning for pupils. The two religious education specialist teachers have excellent subject knowledge. Expectations are high and all lessons feature a good level of challenge, which has the effect of engaging and motivating pupils. Teachers recognize and value the high level of religious awareness and the experiences which many pupils bring with them. They build on these successfully and sensitively in their teaching. The atmosphere of mutual trust and respect created by teachers gives pupils the confidence to draw on their own faiths and beliefs so that pupils learn from each other as well as from the teacher. This was demonstrated very well in group work during a Year 9 lesson, where Muslim pupils were used as 'living human resources'. They provided expertise, helping their peers to understand the significance of the Five Pillars of Islam in people's lives, explaining how 'they hold up a person's faith'. In all lessons there is a strong emphasis on 'learning from religion'. Pupils are encouraged to express their personal responses. This was illustrated very effectively by some Year 7 pupils in sensitive personal reflections on experiencing feelings of wonder. One pupil described her feelings on visiting the West Ham United stadium, while another wrote of sitting on Brighton beach watching the sea and realizing that 'there is so much more of the world for me to discover'.

121. Learning objectives are always explained to pupils and are revisited at key points during lessons. Appropriate opportunities for assessing pupils' progress are built into each teaching unit. Feedback to pupils through marking is constructive but rarely focuses on subject content. Setting subject specific targets against which pupils' progress can be measured is an area for further development.

### **Example of outstanding practice**

#### **An excellent Year 7 religious education lesson, which challenged pupils to address difficult questions.**

A challenging activity engaged the pupils as soon as they entered the room. As an introduction to the cosmological argument for the existence of God, pupils worked in small groups to discuss examples of cause and effect. The teacher used feedback from their discussions as a basis for a very clear explanation of this argument. A demonstration of the collapse of a line of dominoes helped reinforce the concept. High expectations and challenge were key features of this lesson. The knowledgeable teaching inspired pupils and they were prepared to think hard about difficult questions. The teaching prompted intense discussion between pupils about the nature of God and the idea of power. They concluded that 'God cannot be a person – no human has that much power,' – a high level response for pupils at the end of their first term at secondary school!

122. Although there is currently no head of religious education, the subject is effectively managed by an assistant headteacher. There is very good support for the newly qualified teacher and the trainee teacher who teach most of the subject. Both have excellent subject knowledge and are developing their pedagogical skills well. They are providing very good leadership for the subject, complementing the effective management. They are reflective practitioners who respond very well to the good support the school provides. Progress has been made on producing appropriate documentation to support the work of the department. The two teaching rooms are enhanced by interesting, relevant displays, which include pupils' work. Teaching assistants and support teachers provide effective support in lessons both for teachers and for pupils.

123. Religious education lessons make an excellent contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In their lessons pupils learn about beliefs, values and spirituality. There is a strong emphasis on respect for the beliefs of others.

124. The quality of provision for religious education was a key issue in the last inspection. There has been very good progress in addressing all the issues identified.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

### **Design and technology**

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

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

- Pupils achieve very well and by the end of Year 11 standards are above average overall.
- Teaching is good overall and explains why pupils do well by the time they leave school.
- The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is well organised so that pupils are motivated and interested in their work.
- Information and communication technology is used well to motivate pupils: this is one of the reasons why learning is good.
- Standards by the end of Year 9 are below average but given pupils' low starting points their achievements are good.
- There is still some teaching that is less than good, particularly in Years 7, 8 and 9.
- The organisation of the curriculum in Years 7, 8 and 9 means that that learning is not built on steadily.

#### **Commentary**

125. Overall, the 2003 GCSE results are above average and by the time they leave school at the end of Year 11, pupils achieve very well compared with their prior attainment. The 2003 GCSE results are significantly better than those achieved in 2002 and over the last three years examination performance has been rising steadily. The best results are in textiles where the proportion of pupils gaining the higher grades is nearly 20 per cent above the average. In the other three design and technology subjects standards are broadly average but both food technology and graphics show the biggest improvement. This means that pupils' achievements are high and they do much better than expected given the low skills and understanding with which they start in Year 7.

126. Inspection evidence confirms broadly the examination results but with one difference: the standards of work seen in lessons are average. This is because the two judgements are about different groups of pupils: those that left last July and those currently at the school. Achievement by the end of Year 11 remains high because pupils do very well overall. There are, however, some differences between different aspects of the subject. In resistant materials, pupils' practical skills and knowledge are limited and this shows in the generally unsatisfactory quality of some of the finished products. In textiles, on the other hand, the quality of some of the finished products is very good and in graphics, attention to detail means that pupils' achieve well. Good teaching, interesting activities and good use of ICT all promote pupils' attitudes to learning and their achievements effectively.

127. Standards and achievement are not as good by the end of Year 9. Here, standards of work are below average but this still represents an improvement on pupils' prior attainment and shows that pupils still achieve well relative to their starting point. There are two reasons why pupils do not do as well in Years 7, 8 and 9 as in Years 10 and 11. The teaching is not as consistently good and the way the curriculum is organised makes it difficult to link units of work and build steadily on pupils' learning. On the other hand, the work carried out in Years 7, 8 and 9 provides a sound basis for examination courses where pupils do much better.

128. Teaching is good overall and promotes pupils' attitudes to their work well. As a result, learning is also good and pupils generally put a good deal of effort into their work. A particular feature of the teaching is the way teachers organise their lessons carefully, giving pupils a clear structure in which to work and clear expectations of both the standards and behaviour they require. In some Year 10 lessons on industrial production, for example, teachers made sure that everyone

had a specific task and were clear about the objectives. As a result, pupils were focused and occupied, making swift gains to their understanding about industrial processes and their production skills. Teachers have a good command of their subject and in a Year 7 lesson, for example, this ensured that pupils gained the correct skills and techniques. Another quality in the teaching is the way teachers are helping pupils to work together in groups or pairs successfully so that they learn how to co-operate, take turns and take responsibility for certain aspects of the work. Teachers are careful to explain key technical words, often writing them on the board and referring to them during the lesson. There are a few weaknesses in teaching, which make teaching overall good rather than very good. Sometime teachers lack some of the skills needed to manage pupils' behaviour effectively and learning suffers as a result. Part of this is related to work that is not challenging enough, particularly in Years 7 to 9. Where the work is not demanding enough, and only requires a limited response, pupils quickly get bored and their behaviour deteriorates.

129. Leadership and management are very good. Clear vision for the subject, a well-organised programme of work for pupils and a commitment to improvement has helped to create a strong and effective team of teachers and technicians. Together, they make a significant difference to pupils' learning and achievement. The department makes a good contribution to initial teacher training through its links with local colleges. As a result, the department has made good progress since the last inspection.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

All pupils have lessons in art, drama and music in Year 7-9. In Years 10 and 11 many pupils continue with an arts subject, with media studies offered as an alternative. Dance is not offered as a subject, although some pupils attend a dance club after school. Media studies is an increasingly popular option in Years 10 and 11. Standards are slightly below average, although in GCSE examinations in 2003 over half the candidates gained grade C or higher and none achieved lower than grade F. Teaching and learning are good.

### **Art**

Provision in art is **good**.

#### **Strengths and weaknesses**

- The high standards achieved, especially by girls, by Year 11.
- The broad range of media, starting points and influences that stimulate effective learning.
- The enthusiastic attitudes of the majority of pupils to their art.
- The good teaching, especially the very good use of resources including those produced by teachers and the use of visits to inspire pupils' art work.
- The quality of assessment is good.
- The leadership of the head of department.
- Boys achieve lower standards than girls do because many are less accomplished at working independently and pursuing ideas for themselves.
- There has only been limited development of ICT in art and it is not yet part of the mainstream of art teaching.

### **Commentary**

130. Attainment in art is in line with what is expected by Year 9 and above average by Year 11. Overall, girls attain better standards in art than boys across all years in the school.

131. Although pupils start from a relatively low standard in Year 7, the majority attain standards in line with what is expected by Year 9 because they successfully explore a range of visual ideas and media introduced by their teachers. This represents good achievement. They record their developing ideas in sketchbooks and use a good range of two- and three-dimensional media to express their intentions. The influence of artists is a common feature in much of their work. At times

they research and gain visual inspiration by using resources from the Internet, such as in Year 9 when they investigate world cultures as a starting point for designing and making a clay head.

132. The above average results at GCSE are a significant accomplishment for the school. GCSE pupils are strongly influenced by other artists, but also make good use of art and craft from their own and others' cultures. High standards are achieved in both two- and three-dimensional media, such as when producing very individual paintings for GCSE mock exams or making large-scale ceramic pots. Achievement overall is very good.

133. Girls achieve better standards than boys do throughout the school because on the whole they are more independent. Consequently, they complete investigations and research more thoroughly, explore a greater range of ideas and develop their own interpretations. Because teachers have been concerned about the gap in attainment between girls and boys, they have introduced a greater range of three-dimensional work and printmaking. Boys find the practical nature of this work motivating and are therefore making better progress and achieving improved outcomes.

134. Art teachers are aware that some pupils have particular talents in art. They recognise and foster these pupils so that they achieve well. For example, two talented pupils attained very high standards when they took part in a five-day residential course with other talented pupils from Newham schools.

135. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have a very secure knowledge of their subject and use it well to prepare resources that effectively stimulate pupils' imagination and interest and help them to learn well. Teachers set high expectations by providing examples of good work by other pupils or by showing the work of artists. Most pupils rise to these expectations and produce interesting work. The enthusiastic attitudes of the majority of pupils to their art have a positive effect on the quality of learning. Pupils are clear about how to manipulate the media they are using because teachers provide clear demonstrations of techniques during lessons. Teachers encourage positive behaviour and maintain pupils' interest through a range of teaching methods. They support pupils well at different levels by adapting work to suit their learning styles, such as when introducing more boy-friendly images into a lesson on composition in art, or visiting galleries and organising visiting artists to stimulate an understanding of how professional artists work. Sometimes teachers are unable to successfully overcome the challenging behaviour of a small group of boys and as a consequence other pupils' achievements are affected. However, good systems are in place in the school to ensure any longer-term impact of such disruption is minimised. Sometimes teachers make pupils over-reliant on them during lessons, which leads to boys not taking responsibility for their own learning. This was successfully redressed in one lesson where the teacher put a boy in the 'hot seat' to answer questions from his peers, thereby promoting responsibility. Such strategies need to be explored more significantly in other lessons.

136. Assessment is good. Work is marked regularly and National Curriculum levels are assigned to pieces of work at the end of each unit throughout all years. Moderation is carried out between members of staff to ensure consistency and accuracy and records of pupils are used effectively to report to parents about their children's progress. Because teachers have a good understanding of pupils' achievements, they can evaluate what is working well in schemes of work and adapt teaching accordingly to ensure continuous improvement.

137. Leadership and management are good. The head of department has a clear understanding of strengths and weaknesses in the subject and is taking action to address the latter. Good schemes of work provide a well-balanced, broad curriculum in Years 7 to 9 despite the timetable constraints placed on the subject that mean that pupils only experience art for two-thirds of the school year. Procedures and schemes of work are well organised and clear to all staff in the department. Resources developed by staff are very good and stimulating for most pupils. Further work needs now to be done to provide appropriate resources for early stage learners of English and pupils with low literacy levels. Good use is made of visits to stimulate pupils' interest in art. ICT has been introduced into the art curriculum since the last inspection but, because it is not taught by a specialist art teacher, it is still not effectively contributing to the mainstream of pupils' art experience.

## Drama

Provision in drama is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching ensures pupils make very good progress.
- Facilities for drama are very good.
- Pupils enjoy their lessons and they participate enthusiastically.
- Pupils' awareness of examination requirements and deadlines is insufficiently clear and restricts achievement at GCSE.
- Leadership and management of the department are very good

### Commentary

138. Achievement in drama is very good. Year on year progress is assured by very good teaching. Pupils enter the school with little previous experience of learning drama, so standards on entry are very low. By the end of Year 9, however, pupils have made very good progress and they are performing at a level close to national expectations. However, the carousel arrangement, whereby pupils have long gaps between units of drama, has an effect on continuity which impedes progress. Some excellent lessons were observed during the inspection.

### Examples of outstanding practice

#### **A Year 9 drama lesson, where high quality teaching resulted in excellent progress.**

In one Year 9 lesson based on a unit of work, "Craig and Bentley," pupils made excellent progress because the energy and enthusiasm of the teacher was infectious. She showed real interest in the ideas pupils produced, and she involved the whole class in discussion and reflection. Her own role-play of the character being studied provided an excellent model and encouraged pupils to examine how their work could be improved. This time for reflection allowed pupils to dig deeper into their own presentation of emotions, and they went on to portray their ideas around guilt, innocence and justice in a mature and thought-provoking manner.

#### **A Year 7 drama lesson, where excellent learning occurred.**

In Year 7, excellent teaching was seen. The teacher moved pupils on from a point at which girls and boys showed great reluctance to work together, to a point at which they created complex still images of castles with turrets and drawbridges, showing real self-confidence and dismissing the self-conscious attitudes with which they began the lesson. Learning was excellent because pupils were required to use a range of learning techniques, starting with warm-up exercises and group activities and progressing through to analytical reasoning and thinking skills. Sensitive support from the teacher ensured full participation and pupils had real fun in their lesson, as well as serious learning.

139. Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is also very good. Good teaching and very good planning ensure pupils are always enthusiastic and hard working. They study challenging issues, such as the role of women in diverse cultures and situations: for example, looking at the role of women in the home and in war situations. Pupils are stimulated by the ideas generated in their drama lessons. Although the 2003 drama results were lower than national levels of attainment, standards observed during the inspection were broadly in line. This difference can be explained by a lack of consistency in teaching which is historical and since being resolved, has resulted in the improved standards seen during the inspection.

140. Leadership and management of the department are very good. Schemes of work have been thoroughly revised and they offer a broad cultural experience. Systems and procedures for assessing pupils' achievement and setting pupils targets for improvement are well established and very effective. They help pupils to understand their standard of attainment and to know how to improve the quality of their work. Pupils are carefully tracked and their progress is monitored regularly. Appropriate subject-specific target setting is in place for GCSE candidates. The



development plan has appropriate targets that focus on teaching and learning. Facilities for drama are very good.

141. There has been significant progress since the last inspection. Drama schemes have been completely revised. Improvements have been made to the GCSE syllabus, which has resulted in a complete restructuring of examination workshops. The department is a highly effective and self-evaluating one.

## **Music**

Provision in music is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is very good
- Specialist music teachers have very good subject knowledge that they pass effectively to pupils.
- Pupils enjoy their lessons and they are fully engaged in their learning.
- Schemes of work have been well developed to meet the needs of pupils.
- Achievement in Years 7 to 9 is good, but the carousel system of lessons prevents pupils from achieving fully, as they are unable to retain musical concepts and skills during periods without regular lessons.
- The use of new music technologies to assist all pupils in developing their musical abilities is restricted to the use of keyboards.
- Standards of instrumental performance are too low, with insufficient emphasis placed on the profile and use of heritage instruments.

## **Commentary**

142. Achievement in music in Years 7 to 9 is good. Pupils enter the school with poorly developed musical skills. They find it difficult to hold a steady beat and they are unused to handling instruments or equipment. By the end of Year 9, good teaching ensures pupils have made good progress but standards are still below national levels of achievement. Standards of instrumental performance are too low, with insufficient emphasis placed on the profile and use of heritage instruments. Standards remain low partly because of the low entry level, but also because the timetabling of music lessons in a carousel system prevents pupils from retaining musical knowledge and practising musical skills on a regular enough basis.

143. Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is very good. Pupils move from below national expectation at the start of Year 10, to above by the end of Year 11. Very good teaching ensures pupils work to a fast pace and that they are set challenging activities. Visiting peripatetic music teachers with specialist instrumental skills make an important difference, helping Year 10 to realise very good achievement. There is a good balance between direct teaching of skills combined with opportunities for pupils to learn independently, as seen in the Gamelan pieces that Year 11 are developing. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour contribute significantly to their high achievement. Pupils enjoy their lessons and they are keen to work hard. This is because of the teacher's inclusive and enthusiastic teaching style. All pupils are well supported, including those with special educational needs, who receive appropriate work.

144. Leadership and management of the department are good. There is a development plan with appropriate targets. Schemes of work provide a broad and balanced curriculum, though systems and procedures for assessing pupils on a regular basis need formalising. Instrumental skills have a greater emphasis than singing, which needs further curriculum development. However, the use of new music technologies to assist all pupils in developing their musical abilities is restricted to the use of keyboards. The head of department is overstretched but still endeavours to provide an appropriate range of extra-curricular activities, which includes a DJ workshop and small ensembles.

145. There have been many curriculum developments and improvements since the last inspection. Revised schemes of work now include a wider range of teaching and learning strategies. Pupils with special educational needs are better catered for within lessons. However, the carousel timetable has had a negative effect and has resulted in falling standards of achievement in Years 7 to 9 and this will need to be addressed before it has a major impact on achievement in Years 10 and 11.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

Provision in physical education is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A very good department with very good subject knowledge.
- Very good teaching and learning.
- Pupils' achievement is good, sometimes very good, and in line with teaching and learning.
- Ongoing formative assessment is a strength.
- The provision for extra-curricular activities is a strength.
- Pupil participation rates in lessons is very good.
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory.
- There is insufficient curriculum time for physical education, particularly in Years 10 and 11.

### **Commentary**

146. Standards of attainment reached by 14- and 16- year- old pupils are fairly typical for their age, as they were at the time of the last inspection. No differences were observed between the different ethnic groups within the school. Many pupils enter the school performing below standards that may be expected for their age and consequently their achievement over time is good. This is the result of a mix of good and very good teaching across all age groups. This year all those taking a GCSE passed and although the percentage of A\*-C grades was below the national average, for the pupils concerned this represented good achievement. Students with special educational needs make good progress, and there is no evidence of these students being disadvantaged by the curriculum offered.

147. The overall good achievement of pupils is directly attributable to very good teaching. Pupils respond well to challenging expectations, good pace and the effective use of resources. In lessons, learning objectives are made clear and lesson content is appropriate to the pupils' needs and abilities. There is a clear expectation that pupils will work hard, behave well and produce a standard of work of which they are capable, and generally these expectations are successfully met.

148. Pupils' knowledge of health and fitness is strong and the importance of preparing for and recovering after exercise and the benefits of physical activity are consistently stressed and discussed by teachers in all activities. Pupils are able to improve their skills through evaluating their own and others' performances and this aspect of ongoing discussion and assessment in lessons is a strength of teaching and learning.

### **Example of outstanding practice**

**Departmental practice, which results in consistently very good teaching and learning and some excellent lessons.**

Physical education is a favourite subject for many pupils – they are keen to get started and sorry to go at the end of lesson.

The lesson objectives are made clear at the start of each lesson and a fast and furious information recall activity follows. Pupils are confident to demonstrate their previous understanding and show good recall of key words. Warm up sessions are taken seriously and teachers are brilliant at ensuring an appropriate session takes place. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of appropriate exercise routines and an increasing knowledge of muscle groups and their names.

Pupils are very attentive and respond positively to the enthusiastic and motivating teaching that is delivered at great pace with humour and is rewarding of both pupil effort and achievement. All lessons have an appropriate emphasis on speaking and listening, health and safety, good discipline, ongoing assessment and support for each other.

Pupils make good gains in their skills, understanding and knowledge, but most importantly, lessons are fun.

149. Pupils respond very positively to this very good teaching and involve themselves in lessons with enthusiasm and commitment. Their enjoyment of their lessons is very evident.

150. The leadership and management of the department are very good. The head of department has overseen staff changes and curriculum development in his time. He provides a very good role model for the department. Hard-working, time-giving teachers work together as a team, sharing a commitment to the improvement of the department and being very supportive of each other. The schemes of work and lesson planning support the very good teaching. Assessment and recording are very good, clearly illustrating to pupils what level they are performing at, at any time and in whatever activity. Further links could be made between lesson assessment and scheme and lesson planning in terms of meeting the needs of different ability cohorts of pupils. The provision for extra-curricular activities is a strength. Despite limited facilities, there are many sports clubs open to pupils of all abilities and a good range of fixtures against other schools

151. The department and the curriculum are still developing, by introducing, for example, the teaching of hockey to boys. The lack of appropriate accommodation and adequate curriculum time in all years is restricting the potential progress that pupils could make, particularly in Years 10 and 11 and at GCSE. Nevertheless, the current department maximises opportunities available to them, including external resources, both in terms of local grass amenities and visiting instructors that give additional breadth to option activities.

## **BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES**

Work was sampled in business studies and only one lesson seen. It is, therefore, not possible to form an overall judgement about provision in the subject. However, in the lesson seen teaching and learning were good and pupils achieved well. The 2003 GCSE results indicate that standards are similar to the national average and that pupils' achievement is good. No other vocational courses are currently offered in Years 10 and 11.

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

### **Personal and social education and citizenship**

Provision in personal and social education and citizenship is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good use is made of a variety of learning resources and teaching strategies.
- Teaching staff have good subject knowledge and are enthusiastic.
- Citizenship and PSE have been integrated into a coherent programme
- Pupils display good interest in the subject.

- Detailed assessment and feedback to pupils to enable them to make good progress is limited.
- The overuse of worksheets holds back pupils with poor literacy.

## Commentary

152. Citizenship is delivered effectively via the personal and social education (PSE) programme but it also permeates other areas of the curriculum, especially science, geography and religious education. This is further supported by a number of activities, such as membership of the Newham Youth Parliament. PSE lessons are also used to deliver much of the health education and careers programme. Standards overall are above average in Years 10 and 11, especially in oral work. Pupils make good progress in all aspects of their work. There are no significant differences in the standards attained by pupils of different ethnicity but language fluency does have an impact on written standards.

153. Learning is good with numerous opportunities for pupils to extend the depth of their knowledge of current issues, such as the rights of young people in Britain and around the world as observed in a Year 8 lesson. Where learning is most effective, pupils are encouraged to think independently and are challenged to justify their opinions and feelings, as in a Year 10 lesson on types of prejudice. Most pupils are confident in oral work and contribute well when given the opportunity to discuss.

154. Teaching is good. Teachers communicate an enthusiasm for the subject and relate it to the pupils' everyday lives, as in the case of how to improve the quality of life in the school seen in a Year 9 lesson. Weaker lessons are excessively teacher dominated, often with too many worksheets, and with little chance for individual initiative. Expectations are high and pupils respond well when lessons have pace, challenge and there is a clear structure linked to clear learning outcomes. Marking is up to date but more feedback is needed with clear descriptions as to where pupils are in terms of standards and how they can improve.

155. Pupil attitudes and behaviour in lessons are good. Pupils listen attentively, want to learn and support each other and respond well to the demands made. Relationships between pupils and with staff are good. There is respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others as well as their cultural traditions. Behaviour and attention are poorer where lessons lack clear structure and pace.

156. PSE and Citizenship are well managed by a group of enthusiastic teachers. There is a clear plan for developing the subject, especially ensuring health aspects are a progression from the primary schools. The department needs to establish a system to track the progress of pupils and set targets, especially at the end of Year 9. Since the last inspection, PSE has gained more status and is delivered more effectively by having a dedicated team of mainly senior staff delivering it across the school in timetabled slots rather than relying on form tutors.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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