

INSPECTION REPORT

HORIZON SCHOOL

Hackney, London

LEA area: Hackney

Unique reference number: 100311

Headteacher: Anne Uhart

Lead inspector: Dr D Alan Dobbins

Dates of inspection: 15th – 17th March 2004

Inspection number: 265014

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Special
School category: Moderate learning difficulties
Age range of pupils: 11 – 16 years
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 94

School address: Wordsworth Road
Hackney
London

Postcode: N16 8BZ

Telephone number: 020 7254 8096

Fax number: 020 7923 3665

Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Irene Long

Date of previous inspection: February 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Horizon School is part of the provision of the Borough of Hackney Learning Trust for pupils from 11 to 16 years with moderate learning difficulties, although it is admitting an increasing number of pupils with severe learning difficulties and autism. Primarily, it serves the Borough of Hackney, but a small number of pupils attend from neighbouring boroughs. The agreed number of places is 100. 94 pupils currently attend; 61 boys and 33 girls. Pupils come from a large number of ethnic backgrounds and cultural and religious traditions. Four are learning English as an additional language. There are no traveller children. A good number of pupils take lessons in mainstream schools and some pupils from mainstream and special schools join the lessons at Horizon. As a result of their learning difficulties, the attainment of pupils on entry is below that expected for their age. Ninety-one pupils have statements of special educational need and three are being assessed for a statement. The school is part of the Healthy Schools Project (2003). The last inspection was in February 1999. At that time, pupils from 5 to 16 years of age (Years 1 to 11) were being catered for. Since then, special needs provision in Hackney has changed and, as a result, since 2000 the school has been catering for pupils aged 11 to 16 years (Years 7 to 11). Because of this change in the pupil intake it is not relevant to make comparisons with the findings of the previous inspection.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
27424	Dr D Alan Dobbins	Lead inspector	Information and communications technology
11437	Tony Anderson	Lay inspector	
10668	David Walker	Team inspector	Science, design and technology, religious education
32232	Sue Garland-Grimes	Team inspector	English, art, music
18461	Vanessa Wilkinson	Team inspector	Mathematics, geography, history, personal, social, health and citizenship education
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Horizon is a **good** school. Since re-forming as a school for pupils in Years 7 to 11 only, the very good leadership and management has quickly developed a good curriculum through which pupils make good progress in their learning. This is because of good teaching that, for many subjects, takes place in very well appointed specialist rooms. As a result of this, the school is providing good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher is very ably supported in her work by the deputy headteacher and all staff.
- The caring and supportive nature of the school that is based on very good relationships between staff and pupils.
- The very good attitude pupils have to their work and their commitment to doing their best.
- The curriculum that includes a very good range of extra-curricular activities and the very good use of schools and colleges, and other facilities, in the local and wider community.
- The very good provision for promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The work of the school is not checked sufficiently well by governors.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' achievement at the end of:	In relation to individual targets in:	
	subjects of the curriculum	personal and social education
Year 9	Good	Very good
Year 11	Good	Very good

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

Overall the standards pupils achieve are **good**. All pupils, including those with autism and severe learning difficulties, and those who enter the school directly from other countries with only a little understanding of English, make very good progress in developing self-confidence and self-esteem. In art and design, science, music, physical education and religious education pupils achieve very good standards and are making very good progress. In English, mathematics, design and technology, French, geography, history and information and communications technology they achieve good standards and are making good progress. Pupils from ethnic minorities are catered for very well. Over the duration of their time at the school, they make equivalent progress to those whose first language and cultural heritage is English. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 demonstrate the extent of their learning on a good range of accredited awards, including the general certificate of secondary education at full and entry levels and units of accreditation of the ASDAN award.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**, overall. Pupils' attitudes to their work are very good and they behave well in lessons, and throughout the day. The daily acts of collective worship include elements of the many different faiths represented by pupils in the school. The very good procedures for promoting appropriate behaviour and the very good role models presented by all staff contribute to pupils making favourable progress in all aspects of their personal and social development. The cultural diversity seen in school is celebrated fully and this increases pupils' awareness of the traditions and beliefs of others very well. Attendance is satisfactory, and is about the same as that seen in most equivalent schools.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **good**. Pupils are cared for very well and feel safe and secure at school. The quality of teaching and learning is **good**. Teachers know their subjects very well. More lessons are taught by teachers with specialist knowledge than is the case for lessons in many other

equivalent schools. In most lessons, learning is fun because staff plan for pupils to be active in their learning. They, routinely, encourage pupils and enjoy celebrating their successes with them. As a consequence, pupils work hard to do their best and, most often, achieve this. Rarely is there a need to remind pupils of their responsibilities as learners. The curriculum is good. It includes very good opportunities for pupils to learn alongside those in mainstream schools, to support classroom learning through visiting local places of interest, and a wide range of extra-curricular activities.

The quality of care, guidance and support is good. The induction procedures are very good. Pupils quickly become fully involved in the school, even when they have come from different countries and, perhaps, have not attended school at all. The links with local community and schools and colleges are very good. The planned programme of visits to colleges is very helpful to pupils in Years 10 and 11 because many enrol on courses after they leave school. The links with parents and carers are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management are **very good**. The headteacher and the deputy headteacher have worked hard to establish the school since being re-formed. The good quality of the education provided is the result of careful planning and the successful re-organisation of staffing responsibilities, the development of a curriculum that focuses on secondary aged pupils, and the building of a united staff team. Day-to-day the work proceeds in an environment which emphasises support and encouragement, and is calm and ordered. Many procedures are now fully developed, but some require further development. These include those that help judge the quality of the work of the school. Governance is satisfactory. Governors meet their statutory responsibilities, but gain too little formal information to know how good the school is or to be fully effective in helping it develop further.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very appreciative of the work of the school. They appreciate knowing that their children are safe and secure when at school and are making good progress in their learning and personal development. Pupils like school, especially their teachers and teaching assistants. They think that school is a 'good place to be'.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Ensure that information is collected to check all the school's work, and that performance management and induction procedures give more help in its development.
- Governors should operate formal procedures to check the school's work, including that of the headteacher.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Pupils achieve well and are making **good** progress in most of the subjects and **very good** progress in some subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make very good progress in art and design, science, music, physical education, religious education and in their personal and social development.
- The wide range of national awards that pupils in Year 11 achieve and the good grades they gain.
- Pupils achieve and progress equally, irrespective of the cause or level of their special educational needs, gender or ethnic heritage.
- The gains they make over all the years help in preparing pupils very well for life after school.

Commentary

1. The good progress pupils are making in the subjects is reflected by their attainment at the end of Year 9 on National Curriculum assessment tests. Last year, in English, the attainment of pupils was about equal to that of pupils in most equivalent special schools, as shown by the information in the Performance Assessment and National Contextual Data (PANDA). In mathematics and science pupils are doing better than are pupils at many other equivalent schools. In the other subjects, their standard assessment scores are closer to those for mathematics and science than to English, which suggests that they are doing well in these subjects compared to pupils in other equivalent schools.
2. The attainment of pupils in English is limited because English is an additional language for a considerable number of pupils. Because many have been learning English for a short period, they do not use the language as efficiently as do pupils whose first language is English. Nevertheless, they are making good progress in learning all aspects of English.
3. Pupils are making very good progress in their personal and social development. This is helping in their learning because they are developing mature attitudes to learning and are prepared to work hard to do their best. In science, art and design, music and physical education pupils do very well. In physical education pupils succeed in competitions against other schools. These include many London regional competitions, and last year they were runners up at Lords in an all-London cricket final.
4. The good and very good progress pupils are making in the subjects in Years 7 to 9 continues into Years 10 and 11. More pupils gain pass and better grades on national awards than is the case for pupils in many other equivalent schools. They are able to take the entry level of the certificate of achievement in eight subjects, and ASDAN units to the bronze level. This is a good range of accreditation and better than the opportunities offered pupils in some comparable schools. Many pupils do very well and gain merit and distinction. Thirteen pupils left Year 11 last year. All 13 passed mathematics, art and design and drama, and in each of the subjects eight or more pupils passed with merit or distinction. In French, each of the ten pupils entered gained a distinction. When they leave school, their good results provide a good reflection of their achievement over their time at school and are a good statement of their capabilities for admission officers of local colleges and for prospective employers.
5. Through careful planning, the good use of resources and specialist advice, and in most lessons, the effective use of teaching assistants, all pupils make equivalent progress in all subjects. This includes boys and girls, those with different ethnic backgrounds, with different levels and causes of their learning difficulties, and those who enter the school from other

countries, whose first language is not English, but who quickly become assimilated into the work of the school.

6. Over their time at school, pupils take increasing responsibility for their own actions and in helping in the day-to-day events of the school. The caring and supportive ethos that permeates all aspects of the school makes a significant contribution to developing self-confidence and self-esteem and in making pupils increasingly mature. The opportunities some have to take lessons in mainstream schools also helps. In Years 10 and 11, the leaver's programme prepares pupils very well for the next stage of their education and the world of work. Each contributes to the very good progress pupils make in their personal and social skills so that by the end of their time at school, they are sufficiently confident and are assured to anticipate success in a college placement, or when they take up work. They have been prepared very well for life after school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes are **very good**. Behaviour is **good**. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**. Pupils' attendance is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good attitude pupils have to their work and to all that the school offers.
- The good behaviour of pupils in lessons, and throughout the day, which makes the school a good place in which to learn.
- The very good way in which the cultural richness of the school is used to develop pupils' personal and social skills and their spiritual and cultural awareness.
- The attendance of pupils is improving, but remains satisfactory overall.

Commentary

7. Pupils quickly realise that the school is an organised place where they are expected to work hard and behave well. As a consequence, they develop very good attitudes to their work and the school. For example, pupils in Years 7 and 8, who took part in the assembly linked to their learning in history about the Battle of Hastings, entered fully into the spirit of the occasion and enjoyed very much their roles in the presentation. Given the diversity in the cultural backgrounds of pupils and their different experiences of schooling, the development of their attitudes to learning and the good relationships they develop with each other are strengths of the work of the school.
8. Teachers have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. In lessons, and throughout the day, pupils respond very well by behaving appropriately. Good behaviour is important to teachers and it is closely monitored. Each class is given daily targets for behaviour, attention and effort. At the end of the week a cup is awarded to the class with the best behaviour. At the end of each lesson, points are awarded which can be converted into gold awards. An accumulation of these awards result in the presentation of vouchers at the end of each term. This close attention to encouraging good behaviour is aiding learning and is an important contributor to the progress pupils are making. When they misbehave, rules are consistently followed, which may lead to parents being informed or, unusually, fixed or even permanent exclusion. The absence of any exclusions last year shows that the system is working well. Incidents of inappropriate behaviour are recorded well.
9. The personal and social development of pupils' benefits from the cultural richness of the school. Cultural diversity is celebrated in many ways. For example, the daily acts of collective worship include elements of many different faiths and pupils bow their heads in a moment of reflection to say sorry to their own god for something they may have done wrong in recent days. Music from different cultures is used very well in soothing pupils before assemblies. The

School Council provides an effective forum for pupils to recognise the importance of democracy and to take part in debate and discussion that leads to a decision. The good number of lunch time and after school clubs and, especially, the opportunities they have to join in social functions both inside and away from school help them to become confident, increasingly mature and accepting of diversity.

Attendance

10. Overall attendance is satisfactory. It is about the same as that seen in most equivalent schools. The incidence of unauthorised absence is relatively high because a small number of parents do not ensure that their children attend regularly. The procedures for following up unexplained absence are very good and include first morning telephone calls. The link with the education welfare service is good and their staff work well with the school to minimise absences. As a consequence of the considerable attention paid to making sure pupils are in school, attendance is gradually improving.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	5.8%

Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.4%

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **good**. Teaching and learning are **good**. Pupils are cared for **very well**. They gain particular benefit from the wide range of extra-curricular activities and the **very good** links with local colleges and the community. The assessment procedures give **satisfactory** information on pupils' performance and **satisfactory** help in lesson planning.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is **good** and this results in **good** quality learning. In one lesson in three, the quality of teaching is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most lessons are taught by teachers with very good specialist knowledge in very good accommodation.
- The very effective way in which resources to support teaching and learning are used, including information and communications technology.
- The poor deployment of teaching assistants in a small number of lessons means they have too little an effect on learning.
- The very good use of specialist services to ensure that all pupils have equivalent access to their learning.
- The information gained from assessing the work of pupils is not as useful as it should be in helping plan lessons or in recognising their progress.

Commentary

11. More so than in many equivalent schools, most lessons are taught by teachers with specialist training in the subject in very good specialist rooms. Teachers know their pupils very well and have very good relationships with them. This knowledge, and the very effective way they use their skills, results in teaching and learning being good overall and very good one lesson in three. In science, art, drama, music, physical education and religious education, especially, teaching is very good because planning is careful and teachers have very high expectations for

learning. In these lessons pupils are consistently challenged as learners because lesson tasks interest them and match very well with their needs and capabilities.

12. The wide range of resources available in most subjects is used well in promoting learning for all pupils, notwithstanding the cause or level of their learning difficulties. Information and communications technology is being used regularly in many lessons, although in art and music this is a recent feature. For example, pupils in lessons in design and technology make very good use of digital cameras to record pictures of their work, which are then imported into their files to form part of a presentation on their project. In lessons in English, pupils use word processing and publishing programs to present information. In lessons in mathematics, they reinforce their skills in addition, subtraction, multiplication and division by applying them to money, distance and time. Internet access is readily available and pupils are practised at gaining information in all the subjects.
13. In many lessons, teaching assistants make a very valuable contribution to pupils learning, for example in lessons in science, but this is not the case in all lessons. In a small number they are not deployed well and make too little an impact on learning.
14. Teachers, with the support of the special needs co-ordinator (SENCO), speech therapists and the specialist assistant for ethnic minority pupils, deal very well with the challenge of the wide range of pupils' special needs and their learning difficulties. For example, pupils who enter school from other countries gain considerable help from the SENCO and from the specialist teaching assistant for ethnic minorities. As a consequence, they quickly recognise the rules that apply in lessons and the expectations of teachers. They settle into their work very well. Teachers, and the teaching assistants, have broadened their expertise through specific training to meet the different demands of the increasing number of pupils with autistic tendencies who are entering the school. In this they have been successful, as these pupils also play a full part in lessons.
15. In most subjects, information on what pupils have experienced is recorded well. What pupils know, understand and can do is recorded less well. In many subjects, pupils' attainment is not assessed accurately against 'P' levels or National Curriculum levels for the attainment targets. Because of this, information gained from assessing the performance of pupils is not as helpful as it should be in planning lessons or in developing the curriculum. This is more of an issue for pupils in Years 7 to 9 than it is for pupils in Years 10 and 11, who work toward gaining the entry level certificate of achievement in many of the subjects, and assessment is built into each module. The audit for many subjects recognises the need to develop the systems for assessing pupils' performance so that progress is recorded more accurately and gives greater help to lesson planning.
16. Homework is set regularly. The procedures are well established and are working increasingly well in supporting learning, especially as more parents are becoming fully involved in helping their children at home.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 49 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0.0 %)	18 (37 %)	21 (43 %)	10 (20 %)	0 (0.0 %)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)

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

The curriculum

The curriculum is **good** and pupils' learning is enriched through visits, the **very good use** of facilities in the local and wider community and a **very good** range of extra curricular activities.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good use of audits of each subject to meet the changing needs of pupils.
- The very well established and very good programme for including pupils in lessons in mainstream schools.
- The good programme of personal, social, health education and citizenship that is helping pupils become mature, responsible and recognise the advantages of diversity.
- The good range of accredited awards that give pupils in Years 10 and 11 many opportunities to demonstrate the extent of their learning over their time at school.
- The good leavers programme that prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education and the world of work.
- The very good programme of extra-curricular clubs and regular visits to places in the local community that benefit pupils' learning and the development of their personal and social skills.
- The good number of well qualified teachers and teaching assistants and specialist teaching rooms which allow the school's curriculum to be taught well.

Commentary

17. The curriculum is relevant to pupils and includes all the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. Co-ordinators have done well to establish a good resource base to support teaching and learning in all the subjects in the relatively short period of time since the school was re-formed.
18. Very good procedures operate to ensure that the curriculum is continuously being developed to match with the needs of the greater number of pupils who are entering with increasingly complex learning difficulties. The annual audit of subjects provides important information for developing subjects, on the changes required in the profile of accreditation for pupils in Year 11 and the additional resources required so that the curriculum fully reflects the needs, abilities and interests of all pupils. Subject plans are robust enough at this time to ensure that pupils have good opportunities to build on past learning and experiences, but will need to be more detailed to help lesson planning for pupils with a wider range of learning difficulties.
19. The programme for including pupils in lessons in other schools is well established and organised very well by the SENCO. Communication with the other schools is very good and the preparation for taking lessons in other schools is very detailed. On-going evaluation of pupils' performance is very thorough. Pupils, parents and the teachers in the receiving schools, and the Horizon teaching assistants who support pupils, know the objectives for inclusion. Pupils enjoy these opportunities to take lessons with mainstream pupils and gain considerably from the experience. They are making very good progress in learning the subjects and in developing their personal and social skills. One pupil is gaining particular benefit because she joins lessons that are preparing her to take the full GCSE in art, an examination not available to her at Horizon. A small number of pupils in other schools benefit from taking their lessons at Horizon.
20. The good curriculum in personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) is under review to ensure that it continuously meets the needs and capabilities of all pupils. Elements of citizenship are now included in existing units of work in the planned programme, as well as being taught as discrete units of work. Pupils progress is helped because of the good range of planned opportunities they have to develop their understanding of citizenship in other subjects, especially in lessons of religious education. The very good relationships pupils have with staff also help in promoting personal and social development throughout the school day. For example, pupils talk regularly with staff, sometimes in their first language, about issues that concern them, or they just pass the time of day with staff at break times, during lunch time, and in the after school clubs. The School Council is a good forum in which pupils learn about taking individual responsibility. The cultural diversity of the school is used very well to promote the notion that cultures and traditions are important and all should be equally respected. This is

working very well, and the good relationships which pupils have with each other bears witness to this.

21. The range of accreditation offered is good for most of the pupils in Years 10 and 11. The certificate of education can be taken in eight subjects and the extent of pupils' learning is also recognised through the ASDAN bronze award. All pupils in Years 10 and 11 take the same subjects. Their curriculum is relatively inflexible. It is not designed to allow pupils to choose subjects, for example, that they like, or are good at and not take other subjects. Also, pupils in Year 10 are not able to have a work experience placement, and those in Year 11 are not able to have extended placements, or a programme of learning that is specifically tailored to meet their particular needs, strengths or interests.
22. The leavers programme prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education and the world of work. They have many opportunities to take part in a wide range of taster courses at local colleges because of the very good links established with the school. The links with the careers service are equally good and their work with pupils from Year 9 onward is very effective in outlining opportunities that are available after school. Pupils in Year 11 gain considerably from taking part in the very well planned and supported work experience programme. Placements include shops, offices, farms and day care centres. Some pupils attend Hackney College on a part time basis to undertake a variety of vocational courses, which may include car maintenance, electrical engineering or catering. Collectively, these opportunities make a significant contribution to pupils' personal and social development and prepare them very well for their life after they leave school.
23. The wide range of extra-curricular activities at lunch time, after school, and the residential visits extend considerably pupils' learning experiences and provide very good opportunities for improving their learning and developing personal and social skills. Pupils take part in clubs for basketball, football, French, music, history, mathematics and computers. The very good links with the local and wider community also extend pupils' learning experiences through regular visits to museums, parks, farms and the theatre. The most recent residential trips have included a visit to Norfolk to study geography and history through fieldwork, and to the Isle of Wight for environmental studies. The regular visits to local places to support classroom learning are well planned. They help make learning relevant to pupils and better understood by them. This is especially so in geography and history, because they gain considerable benefit from taking part in the workshops organised at local museums. There are a sufficient number of visitors to the school, especially musicians. Pupils benefit from the considerable sporting links with local schools and schools throughout the London region. The extra-curricular programme is more extensive and includes the use of a greater number of local facilities to benefit pupils learning than is the case in most equivalent schools. Collectively, these activities make an important contribution to the progress pupils are making in their learning and to their personal and social development.
24. There is a good number of well qualified teachers who have a wide range of teaching experience and very good subject knowledge, together with a good number of experienced teaching assistants, to teach the curriculum well. The school gains good support from the ethnic minority funding programme to employ an additional assistant. The school site is tightly constrained on all sides and the provision of grass areas for sporting and recreational purposes is very much at a premium. The number of specialist teaching rooms is very good and the relevant elements of the National Curriculum are taught in full. Pupils' learning experiences in physical education are broad, but only because of the regular and very effective use of facilities outside of the school, including swimming pools and leisure centres.

Care, guidance and support

The quality of care, guidance and support is **good**. The provision for care, welfare, health and safety is **very good**. Pupils have **good** opportunities to present their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The safe learning environment, in which pupils feel relaxed and confident.
- The benefits pupils gain from the very good relationships staff have with them and the additional provision arranged by the SENCO.
- The way the good procedures for promoting behaviour and personal and social development are making pupils more responsible and mature.
- The very good way in which the induction procedures prepare new pupils for entering the school.

Commentary

25. The health, safety and security of pupils have a high priority. The vigilance of staff, especially the site manager and the headteacher, ensure that pupils are safe and are looked after. Lessons, visits and school journeys are carefully planned with due regard to risk. The child protection procedures are clear to staff. They are well-established, supported by clear guidelines and regular training, which keeps staff up-to-date with new initiatives. The tutor system is working well and ensures that pupils know an adult who would support them if they have a problem or concern. Altogether, staff speak about eight languages and this is helpful when assigning tutors to new pupils, especially those for whom English is an additional language.
26. The very good relationships that staff have with pupils means that pupils are comfortable with them. The SENCO takes a prominent role in organising extra support for the pupils who need it, such as speech therapy or help from the specialist assistant dealing with pupils from ethnic minorities. Each pupil has a personal file, which gives clear information on how they are progressing. Staff use this information well in judging the support, advice and guidance they offer to pupils.
27. The procedures for promoting acceptable behaviour are good. The personal and social development of pupils is monitored regularly. The 'merit awards' that pupils can gain motivate them to behave well, to make a considerable effort to learn their work and to do their best. Pupils' personal and social development is supported very well over the whole day, which adds to the effectiveness of the planned programme. As a consequence, pupils are taking increasing responsibility and act with greater maturity as they move through the school. By the time they leave school, the vast majority of pupils are sufficiently confident and mature to anticipate success in the next stage of their education or in any job they take.
28. Guidance and support for learning in the subjects is not as effective as it could be. The audits of many of the subjects recognise the need for improving the way in which the small steps pupils are making in their learning can be recognised, recorded and used to help in planning lessons and in developing the subject. In lessons, especially in religious education and personal, social, health and citizenship education, and when they are with their tutors, pupils have many opportunities to express their views and to learn to respect other people's beliefs and opinions. The School Council, although relatively new, is appreciated by the pupils. The leavers programme gives very good guidance on career prospects and courses in the local colleges.
29. The induction procedures for pupils are very well managed, with a smooth transition arranged from the main feeder primary special school. The designated tutor meets all incoming pupils in their schools, after which pupils spend a day at Horizon. Information on pupils from the main feeder school is good and staff at Horizon know about and are prepared very well to meet the requirements of in-coming pupils. Pupils and their parents are also prepared very well.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The links between the school and parents are **good**. The links with other schools and colleges are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good quality information provided to parents that gives them a good feeling for the progress their children are making.
- The very good use that is made of places and people in the local community and other schools and colleges in broadening the learning experiences of pupils.

Commentary

30. Parents attending the parents' meeting were very positive in their praise for the school. This view was also reflected in the completed questionnaires. They especially like the easy way in which they can approach staff when they have a problem or an issue to discuss, and the way in which the school is helping their children become increasingly mature.
31. The information provided to parents, through the regular reports and newsletters is of a high standard. Annual reports and the school's submission to the annual review are of a very high standard. Most parents attend the three formal meetings each year and they are given every opportunity to discuss the progress their children are making. The home visit programme is very successful in dealing with the difficulty parents are experiencing with their children and, for some parents, helping them come to terms with living in a new country. The annual review process is very well managed by the SENCO, parental attendance is very high and statutory requirements are met. Since re-forming, the school has worked hard to link parents with its work. They are being increasingly successful, if only by increasing the number of parents who are supporting the completion of homework.
32. The way in which places and people in the community extend pupils curricular experiences and the very good links with local schools and colleges, including the main feeder school, make a very considerable contribution to extending and enriching pupils learning experiences and their personal and social development.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management are **very good**. The work of the governing body is **satisfactory**. The headteacher is visible and involved in all aspects of the work of the school. She is supported very well by the deputy headteacher and all staff.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good way in which the headteacher and deputy headteacher oversee procedures that allow staff and pupils to regularly do their best.
- The very clear vision the headteacher has for celebrating the cultural and religious diversity of pupils, and staff, as an important characteristic of the school.
- The good procedures for the continuing professional development of staff that are contributing to improving the work of the school.
- Procedures for assessing the progress of pupils do not provide sufficient information for the headteacher to judge the quality of the work.
- The governing body does not check sufficiently well the work of the headteacher and senior managers or the quality of the education provided by the school.

Commentary

33. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have quickly established Horizon as a good school in the relatively short period of time since it was re-formed. They have set standards and created a set of routines, procedures and expectations which, together, allow staff and pupils to regularly achieve their best. They are very good role models for staff and pupils alike, and lead and manage a varied, but united staff team.
34. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school. This includes providing an environment that is ordered and organised, in which cultural, ethnic and religious diversity is celebrated. Through establishing and consistently operating very effective schemes and procedures that cover all the work of the school day-to-day, the vision is made real for most pupils. There are many strengths. The school is calm and ordered. Pupils know that they are going to gain from attending their lessons and from their discussions with teachers and teaching assistants at other times of the day. This is for all pupils, including those who enter the school from other countries in which their history of schooling is very limited due to local or regional conflict and trouble. The considerable gains they make in their learning, and through recognising the importance of trust, respect and discipline in becoming mature and responsible, is testament to the leadership and management of the headteacher and the commitment of the staff.
35. The procedures for the continuing professional development of staff are good. They are making an important contribution to improving the work of the school in many ways. For example, the procedures for checking the quality of teaching and learning are good and include a discussion following a visit to a lesson and the writing of a report. The information gained is linked into the performance management procedures. This results in staff gaining training in specific areas, for example, the use of computers in art and design, or for whole school requirements for dealing with pupils with autism. All staff are included. Two teaching assistants are studying for the NVQ in care and education and one is taking a diploma in counselling. Kitchen staff have been trained in communicating with pupils who have language difficulties. The headteacher's targets have been set and target setting, as a means for improving the work of staff, is operating well. The procedures for inducting new staff are satisfactory, but are not clear enough to support them in quickly becoming effective in their work.
36. The procedures for assessing the quality of the many policies and planning documents are good. More so than in many equivalent schools, the co-ordinators generally lead subjects in which they have specialist knowledge. This is making a significant contribution to the breadth of study in the subjects and the curriculum as a whole and the progress pupils are making. All co-ordinators have accepted their responsibilities and are leading and managing their subjects well. In physical education, the very good use specialist instructors provides expert tuition in aspects of the subject in which the teacher has limited skills, such as cricket, tennis and swimming. In each subject, the co-ordinators have built a good resources base that matches well with the needs and capabilities of pupils. The annual subject audits are good and provide good directions for future development.
37. Governance is satisfactory. The governing body has made a good start since the re-forming of the school. The chairperson is knowledgeable, committed and has worked hard and energetically in supporting the headteacher in quickly establishing the provision. She has helped recruit a number of new governors. All statutory responsibilities are met, but further work needs to be done before governors are able to fully account for the quality of the work of the school and be of help in directing development. The procedures for checking the quality of the work need to be more formal, as do those for overseeing the performance of the headteacher.
38. Financial planning is good. Governors regularly monitor projected expenditure against actual spend. The carried forward total of £67317 is 5.8 per cent of the income. Much of this has been allocated for refurbishing the storage area for physical education, the toilets, and for

making good the security fence that surrounds most of the school. The four principles of best value are complied with. The procedures for financial planning and management operate well.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1149879
Total expenditure	1082563
Expenditure per pupil	11276

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	85656
Balance carried forward to the next	67317

Barriers to achievement

39. There are no serious barriers for achievement, although there are issues, especially to do with the assessment of pupils and the procedures for evaluating the work of the school, which, if more effective, will improve the quality of education.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

English

Seven lessons were seen in English. The co-ordinator was interviewed and pupils talked with. Their work was scrutinized. The use of skills in English in lessons in the other subjects was taken into account.

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The careful planning of lessons that incorporate the recommendations of the National Strategy and the Key Stage 3 Strategy.
- The good range of resources and the competent work of the teaching assistants which provide good support for teaching and learning.
- The good progress pupils make in all aspects of English and the good grades they gain on the entry level certificate of achievement.
- The very good way in which lessons in drama broaden and extend pupils' skills in English.
- The procedures for assessing pupils' progress are not recording the small gains pupils are making and make too little a contribution to planning lessons.
- The very good leadership and management, which oversees the well organised provision.

Commentary

40. Pupils achieve well throughout the school and are making good progress.
41. The good quality of teaching is the result of careful planning that makes good use of the recommendations of the National Literacy Strategy and the Key Stage 3 strategy. The middle session of lessons is made up of tasks that match well with pupils' learning needs and their capabilities. The good range of relevant resources is used well. Teaching assistants work effectively in helping individual pupils and small groups of pupils. The relationships between staff and pupils are very good and this contributes to pupils behaving well in lessons and working hard. Rarely is there a need to remind them of their responsibilities as learners. This, and good planning, results in all pupils making equivalent progress over the full duration of lessons.
42. In speaking and listening, teachers plan very well the introduction of new words and these help pupils to express their views. By the end of their time at school, pupils are able to contribute meaningfully to discussion and debate, give a considered opinion, give reasons for a choice and describe a point of view. The most fluent speakers are able to speak well in many contexts. These include presenting information on a topic, discussing school with visitors and purchasing items from local shops. Many pupils enter school with very limited capability in reading. By the time they leave school, the lower ability pupils read simple texts and know many of the high frequency words by sight. The best readers are able to use their skills to gain a good understanding of text, instructions and the requirements for completing forms, such as application forms for employment. The best writers in Year 11 communicate meaning well, spell accurately with a good regard for grammar and punctuation. Pupils also use word-processing to help draft and re-draft their work. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 use publishing software to present their work well. Most, but not all pupils, in Year 11 are entered for the entry level certificate of achievement. Eight of the ten pupils entered last year for the entry level certificate of achievement passed with either merit or a distinction. Those, who enter school late and are learning English as an additional language, gain accreditation for their learning through ASDAN units.

43. Drama is taught by a specialist teacher. His skill and expertise, combined with his thorough knowledge of the learning needs of pupils, results in very effective learning because lessons excite pupils. They are planned so that pupils are active in their learning. The very good use of costumes, masks and evocative music inspires pupils and they embrace their characters convincingly. For example, pupils in Year 9, impressively, and with great emotion, played the major characters in Macbeth. Year 11 pupils were totally engrossed in a brilliant improvisation of noisy neighbours. Lessons in drama broaden the curriculum by making a considerable contribution to pupils' progress in speaking and listening.
44. Teachers know the learning difficulties of the pupils very well and this helps in the planning of lessons. They are less secure about pupils' capabilities in English because, over all, the assessment information gained on pupils is making too little a contribution to lesson planning. This is because the small gains pupils are making in their learning are not always recognised in the procedures for recording what they know and understand. Targets in individual education plans help, but many are too imprecise to provide detailed support for teaching and learning.
45. Leadership and management are very good. The co-ordinators work well with each other. They have developed English well since the re-forming of the school, rightly, spending much time increasing the range of resources and ensuring that teachers and teacher assistants know about relevant national initiatives. They also realise the importance of using the skills in English outside of the school and actively pursue extra-curricular opportunities for pupils. As a result, pupils have taken part in a pop idol concert, a Christmas show and eight pupils are currently appearing in a production of 'Annie' at the Hackney Shed Theatre. The audit recognises the need to develop and implement ways in which the quality of the work in the subject can be judged. Inspectors agree that this is an important area for development.

Language and Literacy across the curriculum

46. A good range of opportunities is made available for pupils to develop and apply their language and literacy skills in the lessons in the other subjects. In part, this is because all staff have been trained in providing additional support for literacy. This shows in the lessons in the other subjects, for example through using writing frames to help pupils record what they have learned. New vocabulary is introduced and reinforced and key words are displayed in many classrooms. Lessons in all the subjects give regular opportunities for discussion so that pupils learn to speak clearly and confidently.

French

Four lessons were seen. Resources were examined and displays in the teaching room were looked at. Pupils' work was seen during lessons.

Provision in French is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The enthusiastic teaching and good lesson planning ensures that pupils enjoy their learning.
- The high number of pupils who pass the certificate of achievement with distinction.
- The good teaching room and the very good range and quantity of resources to support learning.
- Teaching assistants make too little a contribution to learning and information, and communications technology is not used effectively.

Commentary

47. Pupils achieve well in French and make good progress. All pupils have a good range of words and phrases, which they use with confidence. Younger pupils begin learning French with great enjoyment and amusement by naming body parts and singing songs such as “Head and Shoulders, Knees and Toes” in French. Last year’s Year 11 pupils made such good progress that ten out of the twelve gained distinction grades on the entry level certificate of achievement. These grades are better than those gained by pupils in most equivalent schools.
48. Teaching is good. The teacher is enthusiastic and has high expectations for behaviour and learning, including insisting on correct pronunciation. Pupils’ prior learning is used well in planning lessons so that tasks match well with pupils’ capabilities and learning needs. Tasks are changed regularly and pupils often have fun in completing them, thus making good allowance for the short attention spans of many of the pupils. For example, in a lesson for pupils in Year 9, they had fun dressing in different items of clothing and were able to name and pronounce them correctly. Pupils are, generally, well behaved. When this is not the case, inappropriate behaviour is dealt with quickly and does not stop learning.
49. Leadership and management are good. Planning and assessment strategies are well developed and work well in practice. The co-ordinator is justifiably proud of the teaching room. It is bright and organised very well. It is filled with a wide range of very good resources that match well with the needs of pupils, although there is no computer. In too many lessons the teaching assistants are not deployed well and take too little a role supporting teaching. They react well when pupils have difficulty or misbehave, but insufficient planning for their work means that they contribute too little to learning. Computers are rarely used to help learning and this limits opportunities for pupils to practise their skills and to gain information about France.
50. The French Club, which meets at Wednesday lunch times, gives very good additional opportunities to practise using French, as does the annual visit to Calais.

MATHEMATICS

Five lessons were seen in mathematics, some lessons in other subjects included the use of mathematical skills. The co-ordinator was interviewed, pupils talked to and their completed and on-going work analysed.

The provision is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good quality of teaching and learning over all the years that results in many pupils gaining merit and distinctions in the entry level certificate of achievement.
- Computers are used well in helping pupils learn.
- Planning is good for most lessons, but a small number do not fully meet the learning needs of all pupils.
- The information gained on the progress of pupils is not used well in planning lessons and adjusting the curriculum.
- The opportunities for pupils to practise and apply their numeracy skills in the lessons in the other subjects are too limited.

Commentary

51. Pupils achieve well because teaching is good. Pupils in Year 11 take the entry level certificate of achievement and the number who gain passes has improved steadily since the school was re-formed. Last year, all 13 Year 11 pupils were entered. Five gained the pass grade, three

passed with merit and five with distinction. These results compare favourably with those gained by pupils in many equivalent schools.

52. Over all, lesson planning is good. The recommendations of the National Numeracy Strategy are applied well, especially for pupils in Years 7 to 9. In most lessons, all pupils achieve equivalently well because good accord is taken of their capabilities and learning needs. In these lessons, work is well planned and resources are well chosen to support activities and to provide opportunities to reinforce the emerging skills of all pupils. For example, pupils in Year 7 learn to name the key features of two-dimensional shapes by cutting them out, folding them and labelling them to show the diameter, the radius and begin exploring simple fractions such as a half. In a minority of lessons, the lowest attaining pupils make less progress than the higher ability pupils because the objectives for learning are too broad and the same work is provided for all pupils. In other lessons, the higher ability pupils are not challenged sufficiently because extension tasks have not been prepared for them. Achievement is better in number and shape, space and measure, and not as good in using and applying mathematics. This is, in part, because pupils are given too few opportunities to investigate and use their mathematical skills in practical situations.
53. The curriculum is well planned. It provides experiences that are age appropriate and ensures that pupils have suitable opportunities to build systematically on prior learning. Information on the attainment of pupils is recorded as 'P' and National Curriculum levels. Also, pupils are set targets for improvement over the short term. In the lessons that do not fully meet the needs of all pupils, information on their levels of attainment and their targets is not considered carefully enough in planning and pupils are not sufficiently aware of their targets to help them focus their learning. Over all, assessment information and target setting are having too little impact on improving achievement or progress. The subject audit realises this and a review of both is taking place.
54. Mathematics is led and managed well. The co-ordinator provides good advice to other teachers and has identified appropriate priorities to improve the subject. Resources are good and information and communications technology, including software programmes that are being tested at school for publication, is being used well in helping learning.

Mathematics across the curriculum

55. Pupils have too few planned opportunities to practise their numeracy skills in other areas of the curriculum. In the lessons in many of the subjects, teachers do help reinforce numeracy skills, but this is done spontaneously and is not pre-planned. For example, measuring in design and technology, calculating in science and presenting the results of surveys in information and communications technology result in the practise of mathematical skills. However, too many opportunities are missed because of the absence of a policy on developing pupils' mathematical skills in the lessons in other subjects.

SCIENCE

Five lessons were seen. The co-ordinator was interviewed and pupils talked to. Records of completed work were analysed.

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The many opportunities pupils have to learn through investigation, which helps them understand new concepts very well.
- The very good deployment of the teaching assistant, who makes a good contribution to learning.
- The information gained on the progress pupils are making is not used well in planning for the learning of all pupils.

- The very good specialist room and outdoor facilities that allow the full range of the subject to be taught.

Commentary

56. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 achieve well and make good progress. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are taught very well, have very good attitudes to science and work very hard. They make very good progress and achieve very well. Pupils benefit from lesson planning that gives them many opportunities to be active in their learning by conducting experiments and finding out for themselves.
57. Teaching is very good. The teacher has a very secure knowledge of science, how it can be taught and high expectations for learning. Lessons are exciting and fun. For example, one lesson began with the teacher setting a sheet of newspaper alight as an introduction to discussion on the effect of temperature on the rate of reaction. Pupils develop very good investigative habits including the importance of observing carefully. They have a good understanding of what makes a fair test. The teacher knows the pupils very well and manages them very well. Rarely are they off task. Relationships are very good because the teacher and teaching assistant take every opportunity to praise and encourage success. As a consequence, pupils work very hard at their tasks and are pleased to show what they know, understand and can do, most often using correct scientific language. Homework exercises are set regularly and chosen carefully to help the pupils complete their understanding of a topic. Information and communication technology is used well as a teaching resource to engage and motivate the pupils. For instance, after collecting data on the rate that sugar dissolved in water of different temperatures, computers were used to graph the results. Pupils regularly use the Internet to search for up-to-date information on topics.
58. The teaching assistant makes a considerable contribution to teaching and learning. His role is clearly defined in all lessons. He engages with pupils exceptionally well and works confidently and effectively with individual pupils and small groups of pupils.
59. Assessment is at the end of each module of work and overall targets are set for the year. However, short-term objectives for learning are not set and shared with the pupils. This means that a small number of lessons are planned without detailed regard to the different capabilities and learning needs of pupils. Although, the teaching assistant helps deal with the needs of many pupils very well, in some lessons the lower ability pupils complete work which they do not fully understand. Stretching the capabilities of the highest attaining pupils is done very well. This shows in the results that last year's pupils gained on the entry level certificate of achievement. Seven gained the pass grade with distinction and two with merit, but a small number of pupils gained no accreditation at all.
60. Science is led and managed very well. The co-ordinator has a clear vision for the development of the subject and is committed to having pupils achieve the most that they can. He makes very good use of the well appointed specialised laboratory. The outdoor facilities, which include a greenhouse, garden, pond and meadow land, are used very well especially in the lessons on life and living things. Regular visits to local facilities are also used well in widening pupils' first hand experience of science.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Three lessons in information and communications technology were seen, but many other lessons included the use of information and communications technology. The co-ordinator was interviewed, pupils talked to, and their completed and on-going work analysed.

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The ICT room provides good opportunities for learning due to the good quality of equipment and because each pupil is able to work at their own workstation.
- The focus of teaching, which is that computers should be used for a purpose and not for their own sake.
- The confident way in which teachers and pupils use computers to help in learning across the curriculum.
- The good planning documents that clearly outline what is to be learned, but do not include sufficient information on how pupils' progress is to be recorded or used in helping plan lessons.
- Opportunities to pass examinations are limited to the entry level certificate of educational achievement.

Commentary

61. Throughout the school achievement and progress are good.
62. The ICT room is a good base from which pupils learn about computers and other electronic devices such as digital cameras. Pupils are able to work at their own workstations and have access to a wide range of hardware and relevant software. The whiteboard is used very well by the teacher to demonstrate what can be achieved using different programs. For example, it was used very well to show pupils in Year 10 the possible ways in which information can be presented regarding the make of cars most frequently observed passing in the local high street. Pupils are skilled at using the Internet and search and transfer information into their own file system with ease and confidence.
63. The quality of teaching in the ICT lessons is good. The teacher has increasing specialist knowledge. Pupils in Years 7 to 9, especially, are excited about their learning. Introductions to lessons make very good use of the whiteboard in demonstrating the use of programs, such as Word and Excel. A focus of teaching is that computers should be used for a specific purpose, and learning should focus on this and not only on mastery of the program. For example, pupils in Year 10 were encouraged to recognise the importance of presenting information in ways best suited to different audiences rather than in demonstrating what the computer was capable of. This pragmatic approach to using computers for a purpose helps learning in the lessons in the other subjects. When pupils use computers then, they know that they are doing so to help their learning in the subjects and not just to gain expertise in computers. Joining in the activities of the after school computer club helps extend the learning of a small number of pupils.
64. Most teachers are confident in the way they use computers and other devices such as digital cameras to support learning. For example, in lessons in design and technology, computers are regularly used to gain design hints and general information from the Internet. Also, pupils use digital photographs well in creating their portfolios for the Year 11 examination. Computers are being increasingly used to promote learning in art and design and music, subjects that have made little use of computers in the past. The training afforded the teachers of these subjects has realised in them a greater vision and confidence in using computers for learning.
65. Planning documents are good. They provide very good guidance on the content of lessons over all the years, but there are two deficiencies. Firstly, too little information is provided on how the gains pupils are making are to be recognised and recorded. The subject audit recognises this and the need to assess attainment against 'P' levels and Levels of the National Curriculum. Secondly, the development plan includes no information on increasing the number of accredited awards available to pupils in Years 10 and 11. Currently, all pupils are entered for the Certificate of Educational Achievement (Welsh Joint Education Committee). This award is not relevant to all pupils given that the more able are capable of gaining a grade on the full GCSE. Those who are entering school late, for example from other countries with little experience of computers, are unlikely to make sufficient progress to be able to take the entry level certificate with a reasonable chance of success.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

66. Teachers are well on the way to making very effective use of new technologies. They, and the teaching assistants, use computers well in supporting teaching and learning in many lessons. Even those pupils who enter school with no experience of computers gain from using them. In lessons in English, pupils use word-processing well to finish their work and specific programs to improve spelling and extend their vocabulary. In mathematics, younger pupils in particular reinforce partially learned skills through the repeated presentation of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division tasks. In design and technology, the Internet is used well to gain ideas about design briefs. In the other subjects, a greater range of CD-ROMS will make computers even more effective in promoting learning.

HUMANITIES AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Two lessons were seen in geography and one lesson in history. The co-ordinators were interviewed, pupils talked with and their work and displays analysed.

Provision for geography and history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The programme of visits to facilities in the local and wider community helps make learning relevant.
- The systems for checking what pupils know and understand do not produce detailed information that is helpful in planning lessons or adjusting each subject's curriculum.
- The literacy skills of pupils are promoted very well in these subjects.

Commentary

67. Pupils of all ages achieve well because teaching is good. Classroom learning is made relevant and understanding is better because learning is reinforced by regular visits to places of interest in the locality. Pupils talk confidently about key facts and gain from being able to relate learning to their own experiences and to real places that they have visited. For example, attending workshops at the local museum and looking at artefacts such as clothes, tools, manuscripts and photographs gives a better feeling for life in the past.
68. Leadership and management of both subjects are good. The co-ordinator is an enthusiastic teacher. Planning documents are good and give good guidance for what is to be taught. The subject plans identify priorities for development. These focus on the need for a better system for recognising pupils' progress that links with 'P' and National Curriculum levels. This is becoming an important issue for geography and history because pupils are entering the school with increasingly complex learning difficulties and the progress they make is in smaller steps than was the case for pupils admitted in the past. The current systems for assessing provide good records of pupils' experiences, but do not accurately recognise what they know and understand of the essential skills of both subjects.
69. Although there is no planning document for using literacy skills in either of the subjects, teachers and teaching assistants take every opportunity to extend pupils' vocabulary by learning new words important to each subject. Almost without exception, lessons include opportunities for pupils to present their opinions, for example on 'Would you prefer to have lived then, or now?' As a result of this, pupils gain in confidence as they practise their speaking skills. Written work is expected to conform to grammar, spelling and punctuation rules and teachers are good at correcting writing when this is needed.

Religious education.

Four lessons were seen in religious education. The co-ordinator was interviewed, pupils talked with, the displays in the room and around the school looked at. Assemblies were visited.

Provision for religious education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good quality teaching that helps pupils learn spiritual concepts in ways that are relevant to them.
- The wide range of learning experiences and the way in which they are made relevant to pupils.
- The very wide range of artefacts and other resources that are used very well to motivate and interest pupils in many faiths and beliefs.
- The very good leadership that results in pupils gaining a very good knowledge of the major religions and a good understanding of the importance of belief.

Commentary

70. Achievement is very good throughout the school and pupils are making very good progress. Over their years at school, pupils increase their understanding of the Christian faith as a base for learning about other faiths such as Judaism, Buddhism and Islam. The very good quality of teaching helps pupils learn about religious concepts such as care, trust, respect and friendship for other people and issues that have to do with maintaining the environment. All pupils gain a good understanding of important festivals and celebrations, such as Harvest, Easter and Christmas, Ramadan, Hanukkah and Divali.
71. Teaching and learning are very good, in part, because the teacher has very secure knowledge of the subject. Lesson planning is very thorough and relationships with pupils are very good. This means that all pupils learn at equivalent rates even when they have little knowledge or experience of the religion which is the focus of learning. Imaginative planning, skilful questioning and good support from teaching assistants enables pupils to recall prior learning and build on this during lessons. For example, in a lesson on the Buddhist way of meditation, the teacher gradually lengthened the time of still, silent, reverent reflection achieved by the pupils. Later in the lesson she obtained insightful comments about the feelings and thoughts pupils had during meditation. Pupils enjoy the lessons, particularly those involving discussion and practical activity. Their written work shows they are interested in the facts of the subject, such as the reasons for celebrations and important days in the major religions, and in abstract concepts such as trust and belief. Written work is presented neatly and organised well.
72. The curriculum is thought through very well. It is based on a careful interpretation of the locally agreed syllabus and the advice of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA). The planning documents are very good and provide clear guidance for teaching. The ethnic diversity of pupils is reflected in the wide range of their own religions. This is used well in lessons when pupils provide first hand information of events important in their religions. The quality of learning benefits from this.
73. Resources are good and very effective use is made of artefacts from different religions. The teaching room includes many colourful and meaningful displays from many religions. The richness of the experiences offered to the pupils and the skilful way difficult ideas and concepts are introduced helps promote tolerance and concern for others. Connections are frequently made with learning about citizenship, which lead to the award of credits towards the Youth Award Scheme. This is good, but there is no opportunity for pupils to take the entry level certificate of achievement in the subject. This is a shame because the very good quality of the provision suggests that many pupils are capable of gaining the pass grade.
74. Leadership and management are very good. Over their time in school all pupils experience and think about a wide range of issues. They gain respect for the beliefs of others and take this with

them into adult life. The assessment procedures are good and are helpful in recognising the progress pupils are making and in planning lessons. Lessons in religious education contribute very considerably to pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and Design

Four lessons were seen in art and design. The co-ordinator was interviewed and pupils talked to. The displays of art around the school were looked at.

Provision is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teacher's considerable specialist knowledge of art and design.
- The careful planning of lessons that helps enthuse pupils and motivate them to work very hard to do their best.
- The very wide range of learning experiences that pupils gain using many different materials.
- The very good results that pupils gain on the entry level certificate of achievement and being able to take the full GCSE.
- The very good leadership and management of the subject, which is making a considerable contribution to the very good quality of the provision.

Commentary

75. Pupils' achieve very well. This is because teaching is very good and pupils are inspired to work very hard to do their best. The very good specialist knowledge of the teacher and the careful lesson planning ensures that pupils make very good progress over all the years. They gain a very good understanding of important elements in art and design, such as the use of perspective and colour through the use of different materials, and by learning about the techniques of many famous artists. For example, pupils in Year 7 learn about three-dimensional art by making plaster of Paris models. Pupils in Year 9, create a colourful Mandela design. They know how well they are doing because of the praise and detailed feedback they gain from the teacher. The disco light work in pastels of Year 11 pupils shows very good composition, perspective and blending and reflects the very good progress they have made. All pupils, even with the most challenging behaviour, respond well to the teacher's very high expectations for learning and are receptive to the calm, soothing, very purposeful atmosphere in the lessons.
76. Over the years, pupils experience a very wide range of skills and techniques and work with a wide variety of media, such as paint, textiles, printing and modelling materials. The planning documents are very good. They include all aspects of the subject outlined in the national requirements. The art room is adequately equipped. The work surfaces are sufficiently wide for pupils to spread out their work so that it doesn't interfere with the learning of others. There is enough space for work that is not completed to be safely stored until the next lesson. Resources to support teaching and learning are very good and include many different small tools, such as scissors and scalpels and an array of good quality reference books. The displays of artwork around the school help in setting standards because they are of very high quality.
77. The very good progress pupils make over the years shows in Year 11. They gain very good grades on the entry level certificate of achievement, which are better than those of pupils in many equivalent schools. Last year, all pupils passed the examination, with ten of the 12 pupils entered, gaining a merit or distinction. The most capable in art and design are able to take lessons in a local high school to prepare themselves for the full GCSE examination in the

subject. This initiative is very good because it allows the effort pupils have made, and the extent of their learning, to be matched to a relevant award.

78. The subject is led and managed very well. Over time, the co-ordinator has built a very good range of resources that match very well with pupils' needs and capabilities. The increasing use of computers to generate artwork, to gain information about artists and to see examples of their work, is broadening pupils' learning experiences greatly. Work is assessed at the end of each lesson, so that the teacher can plan different experiences for pupils in the next lesson. This is working well and, routinely, all pupils are challenged and make equivalent progress. Pupils respond well to the very good quality of the provision. They know that they are going to learn in the lessons in art and design and they take pride in doing their best.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Five lessons were seen in design and technology. The co-ordinator was interviewed, pupils were talked to and their design briefs and completed work looked at.

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good quality of teaching realises good learning, sufficient for most pupils to pass the entry level certificate of achievement.
- The good way in which pupils self-evaluate their work and the importance they assign to the initial design.
- The curriculum includes too few opportunities for pupils to learn about food technology.

Commentary

79. Pupils achieve well and make good progress because the quality of teaching is good. The teacher's good specialist knowledge, recognition of new developments in the subject and the good teaching room, stocked with good resources, contribute to providing learning experiences for pupils that are ordered and well sequenced. This ensures that new skills are based on those previously learned.
80. Pupils are active in their learning and are challenged to work to the highest standards. As a consequence, lessons are very popular with pupils. Pupils work hard and take great pride in their finished work and are able to explain very clearly what they have done and why, using appropriate technical vocabulary. They work confidently. For example, in a module with the objective of designing and making an electrically driven model car, Year 10 pupils used a digital camera to take a photograph of their car. They imported this into their file system and used it to produce a promotional poster publicising their work. Pupils learn good work habits through organising their time and equipment. They work well with a good range of power tools and know when they need to wear protective clothes or glasses. The good progress pupils make over all the years contributes to most pupils being successful on the entry level certificate of achievement. Last year, 11 pupils were entered. All passed, three with merit and four with distinctions. These results compare favourably with the grades gained by pupils in many other equivalent schools.
81. The link between design and making is quickly made clear to pupils and given good attention over all the years. The full cycle of establishing a need, making designs, testing ideas, evaluating and redesigning is fully accepted by pupils. Pupils are very aware that their initial design might not be as successful as they want and they think hard about ways to improve it to make the completed work more sophisticated. Pupils are clear that the better the initial design, the better the function of the end product. As they move through the school, they develop more

sophistication in their projects because they spend increasing amounts of time thinking about and working on the design element.

82. Leadership and management are good. The co-ordinator is very experienced and has developed a relevant mix of units, which enables pupils to demonstrate design skills while learning how to handle a range of hand and power tools safely and proficiently. Some work is completed in textiles and a little in food technology. However, the well-equipped food technology room is under-used. Pupils are unable to take a relevant accredited award in this aspect of design and technology. The work displayed throughout the school demonstrates a good range of skills and the innovative use of various media.

Music

Provision is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good progress pupils make because they enjoy lessons and take a full part in all the activities.
- The very good music room, in which pupils enjoy performing music and the good range of instruments.
- The lunch time dance and drum clubs that help foster pupils interest in music and benefit the progress pupils are making.

Commentary

83. Teaching and learning are very good over all the years. Careful planning means that pupils are fully involved in their learning over the duration of lessons. The teacher has very high expectations for learning and behaviour and plans lessons that are interesting and rousing. Pupils enjoy them so much, that for many they are over too quickly. Lessons include a wide range of relevant activities. For example, pupils in Year 7 complete exercises to control their breathing, in preparation for producing long vocal sounds. Throughout the lesson, the different activities focused on how sounds go up and down. Without being aware of it, pupils learned about a scale in a way that was understandable to them. In a lesson for Year 9 pupils, they beat a very wide range of African drums with very good timing, rhythm and the use of pitch. They sing well and have fun miming the activities of well-known opera singers. They enjoy performing very much and gain confidence and self-esteem from being successful in front of their classmates and others in the school.
84. The music room is very good. The resources have been gathered over many years and help support teaching and learning over the full content of the subject as defined by National Curriculum orders. The recent use of computers and other electronic devices, such as key boards to create and perform music is a very good addition to pupils' already wide range of learning experiences.
85. The lunch time dance club provides very good opportunities to learn about the dances of different countries and dances of the past. Over the time of the inspection, pupils showed good skills in performing a very creative dance routine with great expression to rap music. The African drumming club meets at lunch times and sometimes after school. By taking part, pupils are learning about the culture of Africa as well as gaining from being part of a performing group. To support pupils' interests, a visit is planned to a performance of African drummers at a local theatre.
86. Music is led and managed very well. The curriculum is very good and, since the completion of the new accommodation, the opportunities afforded pupils are much greater. The resource

base continues to grow and the use of computers is a very good new addition to teaching and learning.

Physical education

Four lessons were seen in physical education. The co-ordinator was interviewed, pupils talked to and planning documents and the records of progress analysed.

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good subject expertise of the teacher who brings high expectations, enthusiasm, rigour and detail to teaching and learning.
- The curriculum enables pupils to experience a wide range of physical activities and sports, some in competition with pupils from other schools.
- The positive attitudes that pupils have means that they work very hard to improve their performance.
- The accommodation limits what can be taught in the school.
- Very good leadership and management results in physical education being a visible and important element in the school's curriculum.

Commentary

87. A teacher with specialist knowledge of the subject teaches most lessons. Her enthusiasm for the subject limits the disadvantages of the accommodation and results in pupils achieving very well and making very good progress in many sports. She has very high expectations for learning and behaviour. Planning documents are very good and guide what is to be taught over all the years. They inform the purchase of resources and the requirement for using off site facilities very well. Sport development officers, and instructors at the local leisure centre, take some lessons including those in cricket, tennis and swimming. They share with the teacher an enthusiasm for their sports. Teaching is detailed and precise because it focuses on gaining skills and not only on the experience of taking part. Demonstrations are very good. For example, in a cricket lesson the importance of gripping the bat correctly was emphasised as a basic element in successful batting. The skill level of pupils benefits from this and they transfer their emerging skills very well into games.
88. The curriculum is very broad, and includes activities not always taught in many equivalent schools. The National Curriculum Programmes of Study are covered in full. This includes learning the major games, circuit training, dance, gymnastics, swimming and outdoor pursuits. The very good use of local facilities such as leisure centres, ice rinks, bowling alley and riding centre helps make possible such a wide ranging curriculum. The extra-curricular programme is substantial. It includes lunch time and after schools clubs for tennis, dance and African dance, basketball and cycling. It gains from being funded from the out of hours budget, which means that transport home can be arranged for pupils.
89. The curriculum is extended by the regular opportunities pupils have to demonstrate their skills, co-ordination and fitness against pupils in other schools. They do this very well in a number of sports. For example, they take part in inter-school athletics championships and the Sportshall League. This year's team is currently leading the league. Last year, the cricket team was beaten in the final at Lord's Cricket Ground of the All London Special School competition. One pupil is the best female javelin thrower of her age range in all London schools, special or otherwise. The school invariably does very well in the football competition at the Crystal palace. Pupils regularly gain Amateur Swimming Association awards, such as the Puffin award, and distance awards for the better swimmers. They use their learning to gain bronze award on a half unit of the ASDAN.

90. Pupils show a real appetite and enjoyment for physical education and this contributes to the standards they achieve. In lessons, they behave co-operatively and participate fully, including showering at the end. They dress appropriately and understand the importance of warming up and recovering from exercise. They observe the conventions of fair play, honest competition and good sporting behaviour. Older pupils are able to improve their skills and stamina through recording and evaluating their own performance. Lessons in physical education make a very good contribution to personal, social and moral development.
91. The accommodation limits what can be taught in the subject. The multi-purpose assembly hall that serves as a gymnasium is cluttered with equipment because of a lack of storage space. The changing rooms and showers are old fashioned in design. The very good links with a many local facilities minimises the disadvantages. The outside hardtop area is uneven, but this will shortly be remedied as it is being covered with astro-turf, an initiative that was first suggested by the School Council. This will make up, at least in part, for the absence of any grassed area.
92. Physical education is a visible and buoyant element of the curriculum. It is led and managed very well by a committed co-ordinator. Assessment procedures tend to identify what pupils have experienced rather than what they can do and understand. The co-ordinator recognises this and is moving toward using a more quantitative approach that links with 'P' levels and levels of the National Curriculum. This is a good development.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Two lessons were seen in personal, social, health and citizenship education. The co-ordinator, teachers and pupils, who are members of the School Council, were interviewed.

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good planning of lessons and enthusiastic teaching.
- The good curriculum that reflects pupils' needs and is supported by a good range of relevant resources.
- The very good relationships between staff and pupils and the cultural richness of the school that are used very well to support the planned programme.

Commentary

93. Pupils achieve well and are making good progress. Pupils of all ages and ethnic traditions are developing a good understanding of the topics they study. Progress is good because the co-ordinator has considerable knowledge and experience and is using this to develop the units of work to meet the changing learning needs of all pupils.
94. Teaching is good. Lessons are well structured, as a result pupils are keen to participate. They behave well. They gain good support from the teachers and the teaching assistants in completing their tasks with a good level of understanding, even when the task belongs to a different culture or religion than their own. In lessons, pupils' roles and responsibilities are made very clear and the teacher is very good at ensuring that all pupils are actively involved in discussions.
95. The planned programme has been adapted well by the co-ordinator to include elements of citizenship. The discrete units reflect good planning and a very good insight into the personal and social issues that are important to pupils. Resources to support teaching and learning are of good quality.

96. The very good relationships between staff and pupils, the cultural diversity of the staff, including their ability to speak eight different languages, supports learning in the lessons very well. Pupils quickly relate to staff and find a common bond based on interest, ethnic tradition or religion. They are able to share with staff their concerns and worries. The ease with which pupils talk to staff, especially when they are on the residential visits, helps them learn about themselves, their places in society and in developing a sensitive overview of world issues to do with religion and belief. As a consequence, pupils learn well and make very good gains in their self-confidence and self-esteem. The school council, which is actively involved in projects to improve school facilities, provides a very good way of helping pupils develop an understanding of citizenship.
97. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. There are clear priorities identified for the future, which focus on improving pupils achievements by adapting the curriculum to reflect the needs of the changing population of pupils. For example, the co-ordinator has recently started a programme to improve the table skills of the small number of pupils with fine-motor difficulties. The programme of residential visits makes an important contribution to developing pupils' personal and social skills. The systems to check what pupils know and understand are being developed effectively. In addition to judgements against 'P' levels, they include recorded and transcribed discussions on topics that are able to show changing attitudes over time. Inspectors agree that continued development of the assessment procedures will benefit the quality of the provision.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	8
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	4
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).

