

# INSPECTION REPORT

**THOMAS MORE SCHOOL**

Purley

LEA area: Croydon

Unique reference number: 101821

Headteacher: Mr J Casey

Lead inspector: Mr R C Drew

Dates of inspection: 18 - 21 April 2005

Inspection number: 268500

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	11-16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	717
School address:	Russell Hill Road Purley Surrey
Postcode:	CR8 2XP
Telephone number:	020 8668 6251
Fax number:	020 8660 9003
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Dennis O'Donnell
Date of previous inspection:	22 February 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is a voluntary aided 11 to 16 Roman Catholic comprehensive school. It serves a wide area of suburban Croydon, drawing on over 50 primary schools. Only about 15 per cent of pupils come from the immediate vicinity. With 717 pupils on roll, it is smaller than average, but numbers are slowly rising. It has more pupils entitled to free school meals and with special educational needs than average, and about a quarter of its pupils use English as an additional language. There are many more boys than girls in each year group. It is very mixed ethnically, comprising about 50 per cent White (British) pupils, 14 per cent Black (Caribbean) and a similar proportion of Black (African) pupils. Eight other ethnic minority groups are represented, each by a small proportion of pupils. About 30 pupils have refugee or asylum-seeker status. The social and economic background of pupils is slightly disadvantaged compared with other schools and, overall, pupils' levels of attainment on entry are below average. Few pupils leave or arrive other than at the start or end of the school year. The school's headteacher is in his first year at the school, and an application for specialist science college status has been submitted.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
7281	Robert Drew	Lead inspector	
9710	Rosie Burgess	Lay inspector	
27351	Michael Stanton	Team inspector	Design and technology Information and communication technology
31218	Thomas Allen	Team inspector	Geography
19586	Wendy Easterby	Team inspector	English English as an additional language Drama
18447	Ronald Cohen	Team inspector	History
11975	Thelma McIntosh-Clark	Team inspector	Music
3100	Geoffrey Hunter	Team inspector	Mathematics
33940	Angela Cook	Team inspector	Science
19404	Les Schubeler	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages Work related learning
12972	Anthony Weaden	Team inspector	Citizenship Physical education
31680	Phil Redican	Team inspector	Art Special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

Cambridge Education Limited

Demeter House  
Station Road  
Cambridge  
CB1 2RS

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is an improving school, already offering sound provision, with some very effective features but significant shortcomings.** Teaching and learning are good. Leadership by the headteacher is very good. Recent GCSE/GNVQ results have been below average for all schools, but above those for schools with a similar intake: standards seen during the inspection were below average, but indicate that, from a below-average starting point, pupils are making satisfactory progress. Trends in results have been below the national ones, but current Year 10 and 11 pupils are reaching higher overall standards than previous year groups. Value for money is satisfactory

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher provides very good leadership.
- Teaching and learning are good and much improved since the last inspection.
- The school's ethos is good, with a very strong commitment to care and learning in a Catholic setting.
- Leadership and management in English and design and technology are unsatisfactory and pupils' overall achievement or 'added-value' is unsatisfactory in design and technology.
- A small minority of teaching is unsatisfactory, mostly in Years 7 to 9.
- GCSE results are not rising as rapidly as the national rate and boys underachieve in relation to girls
- Pupils have good attitudes and behave well; many show very mature conduct.
- Provision in science is very good.
- Pupils are making good progress in a significant number of subjects.
- Governance is very good.
- The school's care for pupils is very good. Pupils are trusted, involved and consulted very effectively.
- Accommodation, while architecturally outstanding, hinders learning in some subjects.

After the inspection of 1999, improvement was initially rapid, but fell back during a period prior to the new headteacher's appointment. It is now in a period of recovery and overall improvement has been satisfactory. Results rose significantly soon after the previous inspection. ICT provision has improved noticeably, support for pupils with special educational needs has been reorganised and is now very effective, and teaching and learning have improved steadily. There remain issues about the quality of provision in English, modern languages, design and technology and mathematics. Behaviour and attitudes are better than those recorded at the time of the headteacher's arrival. Morale is high and there is a strengthening sense of direction.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Performance in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
	C	C	D	B

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

**Pupils' overall achievement is satisfactory across Years 7 to 11.** 2004 results in Year 9 national tests in English, mathematics and science were below the averages for all schools, but collectively average for similar schools. Science results were above average for similar schools. Standards seen during the inspection were above average in science, below average in mathematics and well below average in English. Achievement in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory overall, but in science, pupils are making very good achievement or long-term progress. Achievement is good in history and geography, sound in most other subjects, but unsatisfactory in English, modern languages and design and technology. Results at the end of Year 11 are just below the average for all schools, but above average for schools with a similar intake. Achievement is satisfactory overall in Years 10 and 11, but very good in science and drama and good in many other subjects. In design and technology, achievement is unsatisfactory.

Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress across Years 7 to 11, as do those deemed gifted or talented. Girls, while reaching higher absolute standards than boys, under-perform compared with national standards for their gender. Pupils from different ethnic backgrounds match national patterns of performance.

**Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good**, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Many pupils display very mature conduct around school and in lessons. A minority lack self discipline but generally this problem is dealt with well by staff. Attendance is satisfactory and punctuality to lessons is good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The overall quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning are good.** Ninety-seven per cent of lessons seen during the inspection were at least satisfactory, and a significant minority of teaching was very good. There are areas of excellent practice. Improvement in the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection has been good, partly reflecting a recent emphasis on consistent approaches to basic classroom skills. Pupils' learning is also benefiting from improvements in attendance, attitudes and behaviour. Teaching and learning are good in many subjects, and in science, the quality is very good. However, in Years 7 to 9, the teaching and learning of English and modern foreign languages are unsatisfactory. Assessment is used satisfactorily overall but varies between subjects. The formal curriculum is sound and enhanced by good extra-curricular activities. **Care for pupils is very good**, and **spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good** overall. Pupils' personal qualities are very successfully promoted: attitudes and behaviour improve the longer pupils are in the school and are both good overall. Moral and social development is very good, helping pupils to become responsible, confident and socially well adjusted. Attendance is broadly average.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The overall quality of leadership and management across the school is good.** The headteacher leads very effectively. He provides a clear and strong sense of educational direction and has set new and demanding expectations of staff and pupils. The school is improving rapidly as a result. Senior colleagues give him very good support. Some areas, such as history and special educational needs, are well led and managed while in science and citizenship leadership and management are very good. However, others have shortcomings: the quality is unsatisfactory in English and in design and technology. Governors are very effective: they are very well informed about the school's strengths and weaknesses, give good strategic support and meet all their statutory duties.

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

Parents and pupils share positive views about the school. Pupils are especially pleased with the quality of teaching, support and guidance they receive and believe the school is very well run. The great majority of parents agree with them. Both groups show a strong intolerance of bullying and agree that the school deals swiftly and effectively with the few incidents that occur. Parents who attended the inspection meeting consider that the school is improving. Inspectors support all of the positive views expressed above, though noting that several departments are not well run.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Raise standards and the level of achievement by pupils, especially in English, modern languages and in design and technology.
- Continue to raise the quality of leadership and management of subjects, especially in English and design and technology.
- Provide good accommodation in areas of the school where it is currently constricted.
- Establish easily accessible assessment systems, in line with current school improvement plans, and take further action to ensure that all pupils and students are clear about their targets and how to reach them.
- Raise boys' attainment, particularly at GCSE.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall, across both Years 7 to 9 and 10 and 11. While results at the end of Year 11 are below the average for all schools nationally, the attainment at the start of Year 7 is below average and they make sound progress. Compared with schools of similar ability on entry, General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) results are above average.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is very good in science and drama and good in several other subjects,
- Overall, added-value is improving in both Years 7 to 9 and in Years 10 and 11.
- Pupils using English as an additional language make good progress.
- Standards are above average in science and citizenship.
- Achievement is unsatisfactory in design and technology overall and in English and modern languages in Years 7 to 9
- Boys underachieve and by more than the national margin at GCSE.

#### Commentary

1. Results for Year 9 pupils in the core subjects, English, mathematics and science, are collectively just below average for all schools; they are broadly in line with results for similar schools. Collectively, achievement in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory. In the work seen during the inspection, science standards are now above average compared with all schools. Despite a dip in 2004, results since 2000 indicate a strong improving trend, confirmed by work seen during the inspection. This is due to very good leadership and a consistent team approach by staff, which allows them to have a very effective impact on pupils' progress. In mathematics in Years 7 to 9, standards seen by inspectors were below average, though this still indicates satisfactory progress by pupils in relation to their entry levels in Year 7. The department has had considerable discontinuity in leadership, but is now stable and gaining momentum in its improvement. English standards are well below average, indicating unsatisfactory achievement, reflecting unsatisfactory teaching and leadership in this section of the school.

#### **Standards in national tests at the end of Year 9 – average point scores in 2004**

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	31.2 (31.8)	33.5 (33.4)
mathematics	34.2 (34.1)	35.7 (35.4)
science	32.7 (33.0)	33.2 (33.6)

*There were 144 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

2. Amongst the other subjects, standards at the end of Year 9 match those nationally in physical education and are just below average in most others. Given the below-average start point for pupils in most subjects, the progress they make across Years 7 to 9 is sound in many subjects, good in history and geography and very good in science. Too little progress is made in design and technology and modern foreign languages because there has been a loss of momentum caused by changes in the leadership of both subjects. Current heads of department are working hard to restore sound provision, with some success in modern languages but too little time to have made any impact in design and technology.



3. Achievement across Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory overall. At the end of Year 11, results in GCSE examinations are below the average for all schools nationally, but above average for those in similar schools. Trends in results were positive after the previous inspection, but stopped rising in 2004, due to the impact of a gap in the leadership of the school and considerable staff discontinuity. However, the standards seen during the inspection show that improvement has been re-established. The attitudes to learning by Year 10 and 11 pupils have improved from those revealed by analyses made by the school at the start of the year. Teaching has improved and more subjects use assessment data and tracking systems well. Action has been taken to stabilise the leadership and management of the mathematics, English, modern languages and design and technology departments. Much of this has been successful, enabling pupils to learn effectively and make satisfactory achievement in all but one of these subjects. Overall standards in Year 11 have benefited from strong departments continuing to improve. Science results, already above average, are set to be well above in the light of interim grades from the examination board. In citizenship, standards are also above average. The added-value or achievement being made in these subjects and in drama is very good, and it is good in history, geography, music and business studies.

**Standards in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11 in 2004**

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	39 (42)	52 (52)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	86 (98)	89 (88)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	94 (96)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	31.0 (33.0)	34.9 (34.7)

*There were 133 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

4. Pupils with special educational needs make up a significant proportion of the school and they are achieving in line with the rest. The quality of support for these pupils is good, though more support assistants are needed to help pupils across all subjects. Pupils make sound gains in their reading ages, and in their skills in working with number. In their GCSE examinations in recent years, all achieved passes in a range of subjects, with some gaining grades at A\* to C. Pupils' with statements of special educational needs make good progress towards the wide-ranging targets set at their annual reviews, which include building their confidence and self-esteem. The achievement of gifted and talented pupils is satisfactory.
5. The pupils who use English as an additional language are fewer and make good progress across Years 7 to 11 because, in relation to their needs, the level of support is good. Where they have low levels of English when they join the school they are quickly enabled to access the curriculum and take an active part in lessons.
6. Boys underachieve at GCSE and by more than is usual nationally. Given that boys noticeably out-number girls in every year group, this has a marked impact on results. The school is aware of this issue and is taking action on several fronts to counteract the problem. Staff and pupils have been trained to recognise and adapt to a wider range of learning styles, and lesson structures to promote this are a focus within the current improvement plan. Black (Caribbean) pupils also under-perform compared with pupils from other ethnic groups. The school is currently making some progress in helping to raise their standards along with those of all pupils groups through its general focus on lesson structure, better use of assessment and a more systematic approach to behaviour management. In addition, external agencies, including ToCH, provide mentoring specifically for these pupils.

## Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attendance is satisfactory and punctuality to school and lessons is good. Pupils' attitudes to school and their behaviour are good. Pupils' personal development is good and their moral and social development is very good.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good racial harmony and respect for others is evident throughout the school.
- Pupils mature well, and attitudes to learning are predominantly very good by Year 11.
- The unsatisfactory behaviour of a minority of the younger pupils disrupts some lessons.
- Pupils show a very good understanding of the principles of right and wrong.
- Behaviour has been improved by the recent introduction of a new code of conduct.
- The Catholic ethos within the school reinforces its aims and values very well.

## Attendance

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	7.1	School data	1.0
National data	7.8	National data	1.2

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

## Exclusions

### Ethnic background of pupils

### Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	300	17	5
White – Irish	8	0	0
White – any other White background	29	2	1
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	20	1	4
Mixed – White and Black African	10	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	7	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	30	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	16	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	5	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	24	1	1
Black or Black British – Caribbean	108	15	0
Black or Black British – African	110	7	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	29	1	1
Any other ethnic group	17	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	1	0	0

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

## **Commentary**

7. Through its teaching of Christian values, reinforced in assemblies, tutorials, personal, social and health and citizenship education, and other lessons, the school achieves very good relationships, and racial harmony is evident. Pupils are taught clear moral principles, which they understand, and acknowledge when they are reprimanded for failing to show respect or co-operate with others. Social development is reinforced very well through an emphasis on group work, on working together to support others by charitable fundraising, and through the expectations placed on pupils to accept a variety of responsible positions within the school community. Year 11 pupils work very well as prefects, reading buddies and peer mediators; younger pupils act as buddies to new pupils.
8. Pupils behave well around school, which is especially noteworthy when they are moving around the narrow corridors and stairways. In most lessons, pupils show positive attitudes, are keen to learn and join in with extra-curricular opportunities offered in after-school clubs. As pupils mature, attitudes to learning and behaviour in lessons improve. In the best lessons, pupils show a good degree of self-confidence, are orally fluent and demonstrate a strong commitment to doing well in their lessons. In Years 7 to 9, a number of lessons are disrupted by off-task chatter, which weak teaching is unable to control. The recent introduction of the 'behaviour for learning' policy, with a set range of sanctions and rewards, is acknowledged to have led to a good improvement in behaviour; however, the rewards system is not yet fully in place, and some teachers are not applying sanctions consistently.
9. The overall level of fixed-term exclusions is low, but permanent exclusions, whilst applied fairly after other strategies have failed, are high for a school of this size. Pupils who show that they consistently fail to accept the values of the school are not allowed to continue to attend.
10. Many subjects contribute to the good spiritual and cultural development of pupils; their response in assemblies and to daily prayers is good. Pupils who do not wish to join in prayer are respectful to those who do. Pupils show a good empathy with the plight of others; for example, in geography, they appreciated the role of people as protectors of the environment.

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

The overall quality of education provided by the school is good. The formal curriculum is satisfactory, with good extra-curricular activities, and teaching and learning are good. Care for pupils is very good and guidance, support and partnership are effective

### **Teaching and learning**

Teaching and learning are good overall, especially in Years 10 and 11 and they are sound in Years 7 to 9. Across the school, teaching and learning are improving.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning overall are good.
- In science, teaching and learning have a very good impact on standards.
- Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9 in English and modern languages,
- In the majority of subjects, teaching and learning are good.
- Teachers' use of assessment, while satisfactory, is less effective than most other aspects of teaching.
- Teachers are especially consistent in using clear structure to their lessons and using the school's sanctions and reward policies well.

## Commentary

11. Teaching and learning are good. In 97 per cent of lessons, teaching was satisfactory and in nearly 70 per cent, the quality was good or better. There were examples of excellent teaching and learning. This picture represents a significant improvement on the quality seen during the last inspection.

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 101 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2 (2%)	16 (16%)	52 (51%)	27 (27%)	3 (3%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)

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

12. In its training and monitoring, the school has emphasised the need to secure good basic features of teaching in all lessons, an aim that has largely been realised, as teachers are now very consistent in planning carefully. They give a clear structure to their lessons and pupils can see where their work is leading. Activities are varied. The use of sanctions and rewards is also more consistent than in many schools: pupils know the consequence of their actions and generally behave well. The vast majority are positive about learning and show good application and the ability to work well in groups or alone. While these positive improvements are currently evident in lessons, they have not yet had time to influence the outcome of published examination results and turn satisfactory achievement into good achievement by pupils.
13. Staff work hard to establish good relationships with pupils. Encouragement is a prominent feature of the comments and the tone in nearly all lessons. While still retaining a common stance on inappropriate behaviour, the positive approach of staff promotes a good atmosphere for learning, within which the vast majority of pupils respond well.
14. In science lessons, teachers enable pupils to make very good progress. They show mastery of the general strengths shown by teachers across the school, and in addition use assessment very well, so that the pitch of lessons is challenging, building on pupils' prior learning and encouraging them to attempt well-judged targets. The department is organised so as to provide support for staff: colleagues are on hand to encourage each other and to whom pupils can be referred if necessary. Non-teaching staff greet and monitor pupils entering and leaving the science area. The scheme of work ensures that expectations rise as pupils progress through their courses and that new work, periods of revision and deadlines are all anticipated and prepared for properly. Similar features are evident in the drama department. Pupils achieve very well in this subject, partly because of good day-to-day teaching, but also because demanding expectations have been established as the norm.
15. These features are much weaker in other subjects and largely account for unsatisfactory teaching in Years 7 to 9 in English where there is no well-established system for using assessment data to guide teaching and where familiarity with National Curriculum levels is insufficiently developed, so that it is difficult to set suitably challenging work for the full range of pupils. Staff do not have good, immediate support within the department. In modern languages, a similar lack of departmental leadership and supportive management arrangements persisted until recently: teaching is not yet satisfactory in Years 7 to 9, but is improving under new management and is already sound in Years 10 and 11. In mathematics teaching and learning are satisfactory across Years 7 to 11, reflecting a new clarity and sense of direction in leadership.
16. Most aspects of assessment are used well in several subjects, particularly science, history, art and music. Self-assessment by pupils is being developed in a few subjects to further improve provision. Other subjects use target-setting securely, while less effective in day to day use of levels and grades to shape classroom work. Overall, however, the situation is no more than

satisfactory because In addition to English, the use of assessment is not yet satisfactory in mathematics and physical education.

17. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Teaching assistants know pupils very well, and give very effective support in classes. Useful information is also provided for teachers, suggesting suitable teaching approaches. However, in some lessons, the teaching does not take account of each individual pupil's level of understanding, and the work set is sometimes too hard for the pupils who are in the class. In those lessons, learning is satisfactory at best. In addition, there are not enough support assistants for all the classes who need them, and pupils sometimes take too long to settle and concentrate on their work as a result.
18. Teaching and learning for pupils with English as an additional language are good. Pupils receive good individual support from a specialist teacher, enabling them to learn quickly. Class teachers receive good assistance in understanding how to promote the pupils' development. Speaking and listening opportunities are frequent. Pupils have a drop-in centre they can use if they need help, and a useful after-school club to support them in their homework. Assessment is regular and is used well to ensure that pupils make good progress.
19. The teaching of gifted and talented pupils is good. Most teachers are aware of which pupils are identified as gifted and talented, and ensure that they are provided with sufficiently challenging work. In science, for example, pupils who are being entered for the highest grades in the National Curriculum tests in Year 9 are given extra support and more challenging work.

## **The curriculum**

The curriculum provided by the school is satisfactory and considerably improved since the last inspection. It is broad and balanced and fulfils all statutory requirements.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The programme for citizenship is very good, enabling pupils to become involved in decisions that affect the life of the school.
- Support for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Opportunities for taking vocational qualifications are limited.
- Arrangements for setting pupils are not sufficiently flexible.
- A wide range of enrichment activities enhances pupils' personal development very well.

## **Commentary**

20. All subjects of the National Curriculum are taught in Years 7 to 9. Pupils are grouped in classes according to their ability. This arrangement meets the needs of most pupils in most situations but is not sufficiently flexible when pupils have widely varying levels of ability in different subjects, and some struggle to keep up with work in, for instance, mathematics, because their abilities in English are good. The timetable is organised as a fortnightly cycle, which gives much-needed flexibility for most areas of the curriculum but in music restricts the rate of progress in Year 8, and adversely affects attainment in Year 9. Citizenship provision is a strength of the curriculum, with its extensive use of well organised specialist speakers and heavy involvement of pupils. The subjects offered in Years 7 to 9 include two foreign languages, taught in parallel in each year, but there are no opportunities for pupils to take both French and Spanish. All pupils benefit from better drama provision than in many schools, with a weekly lesson in Year 9 and a fortnightly one in Years 7 and 8. Lack of access to information and communication technology facilities (ICT) prevents the requirements of the National Curriculum being fulfilled in music, and restricts activities in art. In design and technology, there is no graphics course.
21. The curriculum has been organised into three 'pathways' for pupils in Years 10 and 11, to guide pupils into a selection of subjects properly matched to their needs and abilities. This

works effectively for the great majority of pupils. Higher-attaining pupils are expected to take one foreign language, and a small number of pupils for whom an entirely academic programme is not appropriate attend a number of vocational courses at Croydon and Coulsden Colleges on a weekly basis. All pupils take the double-award science GCSE course, and a GCSE course in ICT. No vocational courses are currently available in school, but the school improvement plan indicates a commitment to their early introduction.

22. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good, and includes a very effective course in citizenship. Members of the school council have been involved in agreeing the school's behaviour policy, and all pupils in Year 11 have been trained to undertake posts of responsibility as prefects, mentors and 'buddies' for younger pupils. The calming, unobtrusive presence of Year 11 pupils 'on duty' during the inspection was impressive. All undertook their duties with great composure, providing admirable role models for younger pupils and contributing significantly to the prevailing atmosphere of courtesy and consideration.
23. Extra-curricular provision is very good, especially in the way so many clubs and societies provide additional support for pupils out of hours in their subjects. There is considerable scope for pupils to develop their interests in drama, art, music, sport and the religious life of the school. The numbers taking instrumental tuition are very low, however, with a narrow range of instruments on offer. There are good curricular and extra-curricular arrangements for gifted and talented pupils which include early entry for GCSE in Year 10, in mathematics and design and technology (graphics). Pupils in Years 10 and 11 who are identified as gifted and talented attend a course in critical thinking, at the end of which they take an AS level qualification. The opportunity to take a course in creative thinking and philosophy, also in Year 10, is an interesting innovation, enabling several pupils to gain an Advanced Supplementary (AS) level grade before moving on to sixth-form studies. Fourteen pupils across Years 8 to 11 attend a Global Graduates programme as part of the London Challenge arrangements, and there are opportunities for gifted and talented pupils to attend residential sessions providing taster opportunities and master classes at university, spending time alongside undergraduates.
24. The curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. They are educated with their peers for the great majority of time, with some modifications where necessary. For example, some pupils receive intensive tuition to help with their literacy and numeracy, or with skills such as touch-typing. A programme of paired reading with older pupils as helpers is very effectively raising confidence in reading. In addition, the behaviour support centre promotes very positive attitudes in pupils who are at risk of exclusion, and is successfully helping them to re-integrate into mainstream classes. However, there are not enough computers for pupils to use in the learning support centre, which does not have facilities for internet research.
25. All pupils benefit from the good attention given to personal development in many subjects. Spiritual development is good; prayers are said twice daily and each year group meets for assembly weekly. Pupils may attend Catholic Mass in school with the parish curate. The ethos and values within the school are consistently applied to promote very good moral and social development, and pupils in Year 11 are pleased to take on responsibilities in the school community. Subject departments contribute to good cultural development, for example through trips and visits to galleries, museums and other events. Sex and relationship education, drugs education as well as careers and guidance requirements are all securely met by the school.
26. The school is housed in a late nineteenth-century building that was not purpose built for its present function. It is a listed building, architecturally imposing, with extensive, very well maintained, litter-free grounds. It presents a number of constraints, which the school manages to overcome well. Pupils move in a very orderly manner through the narrow corridors, under the effective supervision of Year 11 pupils – a credit to their sense of responsibility. The accommodation is satisfactory overall to meet the needs of the curriculum. The listed status of the building imposes restrictions on modification. Since the last inspection, a large sports hall,

changing rooms and a swimming pool have been built, which are used extensively by the community outside school hours. Refurbishment has been carried out in some areas, but others are in need of improvement. The accommodation for design and technology is inadequate, and lessons are sometimes affected by noise from the adjacent hall when it is being used for physical education. Science lessons are inconvenienced by the location of the preparation room on the ground floor, whilst teaching rooms are on the first floor, and some lessons are taught in rooms without water and gas. Science laboratories are cramped and in need of refurbishment, and mathematics rooms are dispersed on two floors. The library (flexible learning centre) is spacious and well furnished. The computer suite is large enough to accommodate a class of 30 pupils.

27. Resources are satisfactory overall. There are adequate numbers of textbooks, materials and equipment to satisfy the requirements of most subjects. Interactive white boards have recently been installed in science, mathematics, English, history and geography rooms. The library houses a good stock of fiction and reference materials, as well as computers. The ICT suite contains enough PCs to enable effective teaching of the curriculum, but they are old and need to be updated.

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

The procedures to ensure pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are good. The support, advice and guidance for pupils, based on the monitoring of their achievements and personal development, are good. The extent to which the school seeks to involve pupils in its work and development is very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' views are valued and they feel fully involved in the development of the school.
- There is a very strong commitment to care and learning in a Catholic context.
- Pastoral care provided by year teams supports pupils very well.
- Pupils with social or behavioural problems are well supported.
- Learning is inhibited in some areas by implementing health and safety measures.
- Guidance for pupils, especially for GCSE options and for the next stage of education, is very good.

### **Commentary**

28. The school council has recently been reactivated, enabling students to participate in many school decisions. Their views are sought on such matters as rewards within the 'behaviour for learning' system, and they are fully involved in helping to select the 'pupil of the month'. Pupils in all year groups say that they feel valued, that their views are listened to and acted upon, and that they can play as full a part as they would wish in the life and development of the school.
29. All staff are fully committed to promoting the school values, and pastoral care promotes learning and supports pupils in all groups very well. Most tutor periods are conducted well and provide a supportive and pleasant atmosphere for the start and end of each day. External agencies are used appropriately to support particular pupils: Black Caribbean boys, for example, have been helped by working with a positive role model from ToCH and the celebration of Black History month by the school. Good procedures ensure that child protection issues are properly addressed, and procedures to maintain the health and safety of pupils have been significantly improved over the past few years and are now satisfactory.

Nevertheless, in addressing some safety issues, for example in the design and technology department, learning opportunities have been inhibited. The monitoring of academic progress is satisfactory overall.

30. Formal monitoring of rewards and sanctions under the 'behaviour for learning' initiative, is now becoming established, and pupils' attendance is monitored rigorously. All pupils benefit from personal tutoring. Pupils with social and behavioural problems are given help and guidance, often through the Metanoia centre, which has had many successes in enabling pupils to fit into mainstream school.
31. Guidance for pupils making choices about the next stages of their life and education are very good; all pupils benefit from learning interview techniques, work experience, and the range of opportunities beyond school, through work in citizenship, personal, social and health education and from tutorial discussions.

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

The effectiveness of the school's links with parents is good. The quality of links with the community is very good. Links with other schools and colleges are satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Links with the community support work related learning very well.
- Pupils serve the local and wider community very well.
- Some very good information is provided for parents.
- Transfer arrangements have improved significantly, but their effectiveness is hindered by the very high number of schools from which pupils come.
- Parental involvement is not as high as is seen in some other schools.

### **Commentary**

32. Very good links have been established with local businesses, and representatives play a valuable role in giving pupils the experience of being interviewed for a job. All pupils are able to participate in worthwhile work experience placements. Governors bring their experience from many walks of life into the school. Pupils are involved in the local community, and the annual Christmas party for local senior citizens is highly praised by the visitors and their hosts. Pupils help the wider community well, by raising funds for a range of charities. School facilities, including the sports hall and swimming pool, are well used by local people.
33. Arrangements to keep parents informed about activities in the school are very good. The prospectus and governors' annual report explain school procedures well; in addition, there are good fortnightly newsletters. Parents can meet tutors twice a year, and subject teachers annually, to discuss progress. Meetings are also arranged to enable parents to be involved in their children's choices at the end of Years 9 and 11. All parents of pupils with special educational needs attend review meetings. The format of annual progress reports has recently changed, so the inspection team was unable to assess their quality fully; whilst attainment and suggestions for improvements to meet targets are included for most subjects, a report for progress in citizenship has yet to be included. Parents' views have not been routinely sought, and the Parent-Teacher Association is currently inactive, although a small group of dedicated parents provide refreshments at school events. Parents responding to the inspection questionnaire and attending the inspection meeting express very favourable views of the school. They see themselves as working with the school to help their children do well.
34. Pupils are beginning to be involved with other pupils through the local group of schools, for example, jointly undertaking research into dining facilities. Transfer arrangements for the majority of pupils have improved significantly over the past two years, but the very large number of primary schools involved makes regular contact impractical. Some pupils in Years 10 and 11 benefit from day release to attend vocational courses at college, and a number extend their curriculum by taking AS-level critical thinking at another college after school.



## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, the school has good leadership and management, with the headteacher providing a very clear sense of direction. Governance is very good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has had a very beneficial impact on the school in his first year in post.
- Science and citizenship are very well led and managed.
- Leadership and management in English and in design and technology are unsatisfactory.
- The governing body is very strongly committed to the school and equally supportive.
- The school is accurate in appraising its own work and good at implementing improvements.

### Commentary

35. The school has good overall leadership, with a strong senior management team and most subjects led effectively. Despite shortcomings in a minority of subjects, the overall impact of leadership from the headteacher and other key staff is clearly beneficial, promoting a period of marked improvement.
36. During his first year in post, the headteacher has consulted well with long-serving colleagues, analysed the school's needs accurately and taken a range of crucial decisions. Monitoring records show that pupils' behaviour was hindering learning significantly at the time of his arrival, but it has improved markedly since his introduction of new, tighter procedures. Teachers and pupils notice the difference and the greater focus on learning now possible in lessons. Teaching lacked a degree of consistency and best practice has been formalised in order to promote a common approach. This aim has also been largely accomplished, with teaching now showing good structure, pace and involvement of pupils in the vast majority of lessons. Choosing to pursue specialist college status has been another good decision: it has brought a further sense of pride to the school, helped it to promote improved links with other schools and led to a reassessment of the level of challenge for pupils. After a period of uncertainty, leading to significant staff turnover, stability has been established and good recruitment strategies have led to numerous gaps in staffing being filled and many good calibre staff appointed. Staff morale is high and pupils contribute to the very positive ethos pervading the school. Collectively, these and other developments amount to a substantial contribution from the headteacher through his planning, action and consistently encouraging personal style when dealing with staff and pupils.
37. The senior leadership team provide very good support for the headteacher. They comprise a good blend of long-serving and newly appointed members who are systematically implementing policies, monitoring and supporting colleagues well and developing initiatives with a fair degree of independence. For example, the substantial task of compiling the science college application was delegated to the relatively newly-appointed assistant headteacher. Together, senior and middle managers show considerable skill in self-evaluation and developmental planning. The school's own analysis of its work and its current improvement plan give a realistic picture of strengths and weaknesses. Action to improve areas of its work has been well chosen, and much use has been made of LEA support, training opportunities and additional monitoring or support by senior staff. Where necessary, the headteacher has not shrunk from making difficult staffing decisions.
38. Science is deservedly popular with pupils and promotes very good learning because the subject is very well led: there is a strong sense of departmental identity and a clear commitment to high standards. Organisation is efficient and staff operate as a team, constantly supporting and challenging each other to improve. Citizenship is also very well led, essentially because the programme has been very carefully designed: it builds on the expertise of colleagues in school and incorporates the real-life expertise of many

representatives of the wider community, such as councillors and police officers. In English, leadership and management are unsatisfactory, which is hindering improvement. Standards are not as high as they should be. There is a noticeable absence of vision and drive and consistent support for colleagues. Systems for assessing, target-setting and monitoring and support are poorly developed. The commitment of most staff is strong, but their goodwill and expertise are not being harnessed as they need to be to create an effective team. During the absence of the head of department, good short-term leadership is being provided by the second in department. In design and technology, the subject has only just acquired a new head of department and has weak management systems and a legacy of poor leadership to overcome. Staffing shortages have played a part in this and have now been overcome.

39. Leadership and management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs are good. Teaching assistants are managed well, and there is a strong sense of commitment and teamwork in the department. A lot has been done in a short time to re-organise the provision effectively, and there is a good understanding of what needs doing next. However, monitoring of provision is not yet sharp enough to drive further improvement. The school is aware of the requirements to promote access for the disabled, and some ramps are provided around the building. However, some problems remain in providing suitable access to the upper floors.
40. Leadership and management of the provision for gifted and talented pupils are satisfactory. The newly designated co-ordinator is enthusiastic, and has made a good start in establishing an agreed list of pupils who are gifted and talented. She is making steady progress towards the production of a whole school policy, having drawn up a good action plan for the future. She recognises the need for a clearer, central system for tracking whether the highest-attaining pupils are performing as well as they should, to supplement the monitoring that takes place as part of the school's form tutoring programme.

## Financial Information

### *Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004*

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	4,163,382	Balance from previous year	-82,745
Total expenditure	4,042,362	Balance carried forward to the next	38,275
Expenditure per pupil	5,639		

41. Financial management is very good. The governors and school finance officers liaise well and monitor the budget very closely. Auditing by the LEA and a commercial company is very secure. The school earns additional income from several sources, but is aware that more use could be made of lettings. Governors are strongly committed to the school. Their meetings are very well attended and greater numbers than usual are on site during the school day, allowing them to see staff and pupils at work. This direct contact, supported by frequent reports and good communication between governors, gives them a very good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. As a result, the governing body provides good strategic advice and offers very strong support. It is efficient in monitoring financial matters and carrying out its statutory duties, all of which are fully met. Spending per pupil is considerably higher than average because of the need to spend heavily on staff recruitment and contribute extensively to the capital costs of improvement and upkeep of a listed building which has experienced some neglect until recently. 'Best value' principles are nevertheless followed well by governors and senior staff. For example, LEA consultancy has been bought in and used to good effect in helping improve provision in several subjects. Value for money overall is satisfactory.

## **WORK RELATED LEARNING**

Provision in work related learning is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils throughout the school benefit from a very good careers programme.
- Very good links with employers enhance pupils' understanding through work experience placements and a variety of work related events.
- Pupils who attend college-based courses have very positive attitudes.
- There is a lack of vocational courses on the school curriculum.

### **Commentary**

42. The school prepares pupils well for the world of work, and helps them to develop the skills they need. This has a beneficial impact on their general attitudes to schools and the effectiveness of their learning. All Year 11 pupils undertake work experience placements of two weeks. With support from the school, most pupils organise these placements themselves. Very good relationships with a large number of employers lead to very good preparation, in the form of advice on interview techniques, workshops and talks. Valuable debriefing of pupils, soon after the placements, enables them to reflect on their experiences.
43. A very good programme of careers education is provided for all pupils in Years 7 to 11. It includes a work-shadowing day for pupils in Year 9, and a 'Futures Day' on which visitors who hold a wide variety of jobs work with small groups to enlighten them on various aspects of the world of employment. In Year 10, pupils prepare a CV, complete application forms, write letters of application and are then interviewed formally for posts of responsibility in the school. There are also good relationships with the Connexions service, and all Year 11 pupils have individual interviews with a Connexions officer.
44. The curriculum is well planned to enable a small number of pupils in Years 10 and 11 to attend a good range of courses at Croydon and Coulsden colleges on one day per week. The courses include carpentry, hair and beauty, plumbing, engineering, performing arts and sports. All the pupils involved speak enthusiastically about their courses and how their awareness of the importance of personal and communication skills, as well as practical skills, has been raised.
45. Work related learning is well led and managed. Because of very good links with the highly practical citizenship course and the strong personal, social and health education programme, pupils in all Year groups receive a much better than usual introduction to learning about work and opportunities for learning at work. An audit has been carried out to assess the contribution made by subjects in the mainstream curriculum, and to assess the training needs of teachers.
46. There are no applied vocational courses on the current school curriculum, but this is being reviewed, and there are plans to introduce work related courses next year.

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

## SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

### ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

#### English

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below average by Year 11 and improving; achievement is satisfactory overall by Year 11.
- Teaching and learning have a satisfactory overall impact, but are unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9.
- Leadership and management are unsatisfactory, but improvements are beginning to take effect.
- Drama considerably enhances the provision for English.

#### Commentary

47. Results in the 2004 national tests for Year 9 pupils were well below average. Standards at the end of Year 9 are well below average and pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory. They do not achieve as well as they should because, whilst teaching in lessons is often good, assessment of pupils' work is unsatisfactory. Pupils are unsure about how to improve, because they do not receive regular feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of their written work. Very few pupils achieve the highest levels. Higher-attaining pupils understand themes and relationships in *Macbeth*, but do not analyse language sufficiently. Lower-attaining pupils, the majority, use only basic sentence structures and their presentation is disorganised. Spelling and punctuation are weak. Pupils have little awareness of audience when speaking.
48. Results in the GCSE examinations in 2004 were well below average. Pupils did not do as well in English as in their other subjects. This is particularly the case for boys, whose performance was well below that of the girls – more so than is the case nationally. Pupils did much better in English than in English literature. When compared to their attainment on entry to the school, achievement is satisfactory. Standards at the end of Year 11 are below average, although they have improved, because pupils have completed their coursework much earlier and more competently than in the past. The improvement in literature is marked. Assessment in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory: it is used regularly to ensure pupils know how to improve. Standards in reading, and speaking and listening, are higher than those in writing.
49. Overall, achievement across the five years is satisfactory. Despite some remaining weaknesses, with which the school is dealing, pupils currently in Year 11 have overcome considerable initial limitations in their command of literacy and study skills. Their scores in National Curriculum tests in Year 6 and in nationally accredited aptitude tests conducted in Year 7 show a very marked deficit compared with national norms, yet the school has succeeded in countering these adequately. Pupils with special educational needs also make satisfactory progress; teachers know their needs and they receive satisfactory, and often good, support in lessons. Not enough is done, however, to encourage gifted and talented pupils to develop to their full potential. The few pupils using English as an additional language and at an early stage of language acquisition make good progress and join in lessons enthusiastically.
50. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, but varies, ranging from very good to occasionally unsatisfactory. Teaching and learning are better in Years 10 and 11 than Years 7 to 9, where teaching's overall impact on achievement is unsatisfactory. Lessons are well structured, with clear objectives and effective endings, ensuring that pupils know what is to be done and understand what they have learned. Longer-term planning, so that learning is

progressive, is less assured, but this aspect is developing. When teaching is good, work is targeted appropriately at the various levels of attainment in the classroom, but this does not always happen. Relationships are good, and pupils behave well in the majority of lessons, but in unsatisfactory lessons pupils do not work hard enough. Teachers use interesting resources to stimulate pupils' learning: for example, during the inspection, pupils enjoyed a very useful production of *Macbeth*, which was good revision for their forthcoming examinations. Teachers use the electronic whiteboard effectively to enhance their lesson presentations. Homework is not set often enough to extend pupils' work in the classroom.

51. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. The head of department has conducted too little monitoring of standards and teaching and learning to identify and rectify weaknesses, and in the past there has been a lack of vision and low expectations. Present, interim, management is working hard to implement improvements and these are beginning to have a positive effect on departmental morale, but there remains much to be done. Improvements have taken place, largely arising from whole-school initiatives on lesson structure and behaviour management. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Standards had declined, but are now improving. Teaching and learning have improved. Discontinuity of staffing has had an adverse effect on standards, a feature commented upon by parents, but staffing is now more stable.

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

52. Standards in literacy are below average. Standards of speaking and listening are average. Pupils speak confidently, both as individuals and in groups, but do not always adapt language to their particular audience. Reading standards are below average, but pupils can access the curriculum competently. They are least good at writing.
53. Procedures for developing pupils' literacy across the curriculum are satisfactory. Some departments have good procedures, but arrangements lack the co-ordination and drive to make them really effective. Where procedures are good, for example in history, standards improve, because pupils are taught how to develop and improve their writing for specific purposes. Pupils are taught in music how to listen purposefully, which enhances their response to music. In most subjects, teachers take care when introducing important subject-specific vocabulary. Pupils have useful spelling lists in their planners, which helps them to improve their spelling.

### **Modern foreign languages**

Provision in modern foreign languages (French and Spanish) is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- GCSE results are well below the national average.
- Standards in Years 10 and 11 are improving.
- Inconsistencies in the quality of teaching hinder pupils' achievement in Years 7 to 9.
- New leadership and management of the subject are driving the department in the right direction.

### **Commentary**

54. In 2003 and 2004, the GCSE results in French were well below the national average. Teacher assessments of pupils' work at the end of Year 9 show that standards were well below the national average in the last two years. The department has suffered from much staffing disruption in recent years, which has adversely affected pupils' achievement.

55. Standards seen during the inspection were well below the national average at the end of Year 9, and pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory. Pupils generally lack confidence, especially in speaking French or Spanish, and only the highest-attaining pupils have a firm understanding of tenses other than the present. Other pupils use a limited range of structures, and struggle to apply the rules of grammar accurately. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress.
56. The work of current Year 11 pupils shows an improvement. Standards are below the national average, but they represent satisfactory achievement over the pupils' five years in the school. Reading and listening skills are more highly developed than writing and speaking skills. Some of the coursework of higher-attaining pupils shows a good knowledge of different tenses and a wide range of vocabulary.
57. Although much of the teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 is good, the overall quality is unsatisfactory, because of inconsistencies in the methods used. Many lessons have a clear focus and are conducted at a lively pace that sustains the pupils' interest. Pupils apply themselves well, because relationships are good and they are aware of the progress that they are making. However, the management of pupils in a significant number of classes is weak, and consequently those pupils do not make enough progress.
58. In Years 10 and 11, the overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. In most lessons it is good and, as a result, the standards of pupils' work are improving. Teachers motivate their pupils by explaining very clearly what they need to do in order to gain specific examination grades, and by providing a variety of appropriate activities that enable them to learn effectively. In a small minority of lessons the chief focus is unclear and pupils' learning is less effective. Because of difficulties accessing the school's facilities on a regular basis, the use of ICT to develop pupils' learning is underdeveloped.
59. The leadership and management of the department are satisfactory. The recently appointed subject leader has drawn up appropriate schemes of work, which were previously lacking, and has implemented a programme of lesson observations in order to share ideas more widely, with a view to improving standards. She is strongly committed to driving the department forward, and is well supported by the school's senior management team in analysing the students' performance. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. Standards at the end of Year 11 are improving, a clear path for progression in pupils' learning is now firmly in place and there is sound capacity for continued improvement.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards have risen over time, in spite of the difficulty in recruiting and retaining teachers.
- Improvement since the previous inspection has been good.
- Assessment is not used well enough to raise standards, because pupils are not sufficiently involved in assessing their own work or setting short-term targets.
- There is good and very good practice in the department, worthy of being shared more widely

### **Commentary**

60. Despite recent staffing shortages and more changes in leadership than the school would have wished, the subject has shown good improvement since the last inspection and continues to record rising standards. Current leadership, while new, is very strong and clear. The impact of senior staff and whole-school initiatives in teaching and learning and in pupil management has helped sustain progress during an uncertain phase.

61. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is below the national average. The school has found it difficult to recruit and retain mathematics teachers since the previous inspection in 1999. The 1999 inspection report refers to test and examination results being very low – well below the national averages. In spite of staffing difficulties, standards at GCSE and in Years 7 to 9 have risen faster than the national average, reflecting overall good improvement since the previous inspection.
62. Nevertheless, examination results in mathematics were still below the average for all schools in both 2003 and 2004. Girls performed better than boys in both Year 9 and Year 11 in 2004, but the reverse was true in other years. Achievement, as measured by individual pupils' progress between national tests in Year 9 and examinations in Year 11, was also below average, except in the GCSE examinations for 2004, when progress was better than might be expected. The results were broadly in line with those in similar schools, based on take-up of free school meals.
63. Current standards are similar to those reflected in these examination results. Across the school, achievement is satisfactory. Pupils' work improves from below average on entry in Year 7 to just about average by the end of Year 11. For most, algebra proves more difficult than other elements of mathematics. The grouping of pupils by ability is less clear than is normally the case. In Years 7 to 9, for example, there are pupils who are capable of gaining higher National Curriculum levels (6 or 7) who are not in top sets. Overall, just over seven in ten pupils are expected to achieve a National Curriculum level 5 or higher in the test this summer. By the time they are ready to take the GCSE examination, higher-attaining mathematicians can handle basic vector algebra with confidence and solve quadratic equations by finding factors. The wide variation of ability within sets remains. In the top set in Year 11, for example, there are pupils who do not readily distinguish between the sine and cosine of an angle and struggle when required to use prime factors to identify the least common multiple of given numbers, alongside others with the potential to gain an A\* grade. Overall, few pupils are unlikely to fail to obtain a grade, and more than four in ten are on course for a C grade or better.
64. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Teachers are aware of their needs, and ensure that they progress, with the help of teaching assistants, who also know the pupils well and take a genuine interest in their progress and welfare. Pupils for whom English is an additional language also achieve in line with others, in spite of a lack of flexibility in timetabling arrangements, which sometimes leads to higher-attaining mathematicians with developing language skills being placed in lower ability sets, from which they cannot readily be promoted.
65. The quality of the pupils' learning is satisfactory overall, because teaching is satisfactory. Within this overall judgement, there are variations in the quality of learning and teaching, including much that is good and very good, alongside a small proportion that is unsatisfactory. The best lessons are very well organised and delivered with pace and clarity, so that the pupils are challenged and work hard throughout. For example, in a Year 9 class, pupils with a wide range of attainment were most effectively organised into small groups and enabled to make very good progress at data-handling. They were presented with a range of challenging work, suited to the very different abilities of the pupils.
66. In most lessons, the prevalent approach is didactic. Teachers spend much of the time talking, either explaining or using questions and answers to help pupils understand. The great majority of lessons lack the sense of fun and enjoyment that is to be found where pupils learn best. A Year 11 algebra lesson on multiplying brackets was an exception, and provided the only case where pupils said they enjoyed mathematics better than other subjects. Elsewhere, even in lessons that were in other respects very good, the ethos established was business-like but lacking in inspiration. In almost all lessons, the pupils behave well or better, and relationships are good, because of the teachers' high expectations and because pupils respect their teachers and each other.

67. The use of assessment is unsatisfactory. Teachers ensure that the bulk of the pupils' work is marked and corrected, but do not make sure that pupils focus on areas of weakness or on what they need to do to improve. Some pupils do not know the level at which they are working in terms of the National Curriculum or GCSE. Short-term, well-focused targets are not used effectively enough.
68. Leadership and management of the mathematics department are satisfactory. Five different heads of department have been appointed in the last six years. This long period of change has left a legacy of limited management systems and curricular organisation. The new head of department has made a secure start, having set a clear agenda for improvement, leading well by example with his teaching and having instigated improved management systems. Teamwork in the department is limited, exacerbated by teaching rooms being located on different floors in the school, some distance apart. Insufficient time is being spent sharing the good and very good practice that exists across all of the teachers. There is capacity for improvement, with action required to complete the upgrading of systems, especially those for assessment, and to promote a more collaborative approach within the department.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

69. In subjects across the curriculum, pupils demonstrate mathematical and numerical skills that are below those seen nationally. In general, however, their skills are sufficient for them to be able to access what they are studying. In science, for example, pupils produce careful work with graphs and diagrams, but some are not confident when using a protractor to measure angles. By contrast, in geography, even pupils who find mathematics difficult handled data well when recording differences in temperature at different times and in different places around the school. There is a school policy for numeracy, which is effective in most departments, although not all.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers' high expectations, coupled with pupils' positive attitudes and good behaviour, lead to a very good learning environment.
- Skilful teaching, combined with strong subject knowledge, results in pupils' ability to use science terminology appropriately.
- Very good relationships between staff and pupils ensure that pupils feel confident to rise to the challenges set.
- The technician provides strong departmental support, ensuring that pupils' learning opportunities are maximised.
- Accommodation limits opportunities for pupils to engage in practical work.
- Good assessment of pupils' achievement drives standards higher.

### **Commentary**

70. On entry to the school, pupils have below-average attainment levels. The results at the end of Year 9 are broadly in line with all schools nationally, but are above average when compared with similar schools. Although results dipped very slightly in 2004, since 2001 they have been improving at a faster rate than the national trend. Performance in science over the last four years has been better than in both English and mathematics.
71. GCSE results in 2004 were above the national average, both in terms of the proportion gaining an A\* to G grade and of the proportion gaining higher grades (A\* to C). 2004 results showed a continuation of the upward trend in A\* to C grades. Nearly all pupils (93 per cent in



2004) take a double-science award and their performance, when compared with similar schools, is well above average. In 2004, pupils made more progress in science than in other subjects.

72. Standards seen in pupils' work during the inspection were above average at the end of Year 9. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 9 were able to give detailed class presentations on the problems associated with chemical fertilizers and the concerns surrounding genetically modified crops. Interim school data indicates that the additional support put in place to rectify the dip in 2004 Year 9 results is achieving its aim of further raising standards. Achievement across Years 7 to 9 is very good. When the pupils enter Year 10, standards are already above average, and this is maintained through Year 11, with pupils making good progress. Pupils' achievement across Years 7 to 11 is very good.
73. Teaching and learning are very good overall. There is a high proportion of consistently good or better teaching throughout the year groups. Such consistency, combined with very good leadership and management, good use of assessment and feedback, high expectations and very good pupils' attitudes, promotes very good teaching and learning overall. The staff's high expectations are matched by the pupils' motivation, which fosters an excitement for science. Stimulating question-and-answer sessions enhance learning. Teachers' strong subject knowledge and consistent application of scientific terminology means that pupils are familiar with scientific language and can use it confidently. Very good relationships, based on respect and courtesy, create a secure learning environment where pupils can take responsibility for extending their understanding. Starter activities, often used to motivate pupils on arrival in the laboratory, ensure that a purposeful learning environment is quickly established. In lessons where teaching is very good, a brisk pace, coupled with changes in activity, ensures that pupils are fully engaged and learning opportunities are maximised. In a less effective lesson, pace slowed during practical work and, although the aims of the lesson were met, several opportunities to extend learning were missed owing to lack of time. Good monitoring and assessment of progress are used to inform planning and provide feedback to pupils so that they know how to improve. Lessons are structured well to take account of different learning needs. Pupils with special educational needs receive well-planned support. Teachers are developing their use of ICT to enhance learning.
74. The science block is not suitably equipped for all science teaching. Pupils have limited access to ICT, and not all laboratories are fully equipped with gas and water, limiting the opportunity for practical work.
75. Leadership and management are very good. There is a strong, stable teaching team, supported very well by a technician. A clear vision, which capitalises on current successes whilst focusing on raising achievement even further, is shared by all staff. The head of department is a good role model and his enthusiasm for his subject engenders a very positive ethos. The recent departmental review provides evidence of the robust approach applied to the self-evaluation process. There is a strong commitment to using tracking data to maximise the achievement of each pupil. The curriculum is under review and there are plans to introduce separate sciences at GCSE in 2005, with a vocational GCSE also being offered. Additional resources have already been allocated to this. There are further plans to develop the observation of lessons, so that staff can share good practice regularly. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils are achieving well by the end of Year 11.
- Pupils work hard and want to achieve well.

- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- The school computers are dated, unreliable and in need of replacement.
- ICT in other subjects is not yet developed enough.

### **Commentary**

76. In 2004, teacher assessments indicated that National Curriculum levels were below the national average in Year 9. Standards on entry to the school are below average, and inspection evidence is that by the end of Year 9 they are just below average. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory: they are sufficiently challenged in ICT lessons. In common with the national picture, girls continue to perform better than the boys. The achievement of pupils with statements of special educational needs is satisfactory. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 now follow nationally recognised units of work. Evidence in pupils' work indicates that standards continue to improve.
77. In 2004, GCSE results were below average, with girls performing much better than boys. Pupils' results in ICT were similar to those of their other subjects. Standards overall in Year 11 are now average, and represent good achievement since the end of Year 9. Likewise, pupils with statements of special educational needs achieve well. Pupils' achievement is good, because the course is tailored to suit their needs and is well taught.
78. Overall, the teaching is good. It is lively, stimulating and engages pupils well, because teachers have expert subject knowledge and plan their lessons well. Homework is used well to reinforce and extend learning. Committed and experienced specialist teachers now teach all courses, which has a positive impact on pupils' learning, because it enables the pupils following the GCSE course to improve their examination grades. The marking of pupils' work and the feedback provided are satisfactory: pupils know how to improve their work. The recording and tracking of pupils' progress is systematic and is developing.
79. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The head of department has developed a positive ethos within the ICT areas. Systems are in place so that she can monitor teaching and learning and use this information to inform the development of the department. She is, therefore, aware of areas in need of improvement, and plans are in place to raise pupils' attainment further. There is now an effective teaching team, and this contributes well to the department's further development. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection, and the curriculum now meets statutory requirements. The department is ill-equipped and has computers approaching obsolescence, with many pupils preferring to work on better home computers. A committed technician provides support that has kept the aging system working, thus having a positive impact on standards.

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

80. Pupils' competence in ICT is satisfactory and therefore there are no serious barriers to learning. The majority of pupils use high-specification home computers to support their schoolwork in other subjects. The programmes for using ICT across the curriculum are underdeveloped. There is effective use of computers in some curricular areas, such as citizenship, where ICT is the context in which lessons are taught. Pupils studying geography make good use of the Internet for their research activities. Provision for pupils with statements of special educational needs is unsatisfactory, because of unreliable computers in the learning support unit. ICT in physical education and modern foreign languages is unsatisfactory, with little or no evidence of its use seen in pupils' work. It is poor in music, because the department is struggling with outdated and malfunctioning resources.

## HUMANITIES

### History

Provision in history is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attainment at the end of Year 9 and the end of Year 11 is still below national expectations.
- The teaching of history is good, with some very good features. This leads to good learning.
- Pupils do not have sufficient access to ICT to enhance their learning.
- Pupils make good progress, from low attainment at entry.
- Pupils' poor oracy and literacy impede their success.
- Pupils do not have a sound enough grasp of techniques to help them retain and recall facts for examinations.

#### Commentary

81. Standards of attainment on entry to the school are well below average. Standards in teacher-assessed attainment tests at the end of Year 9 are below the national levels, with 44 per cent achieving level 5 and above. Observation of lessons and analysis of pupils' work confirm that attainment in classwork is below national expectations. Higher-attaining pupils analyse a range of primary and secondary evidence to produce effective historical individual projects. All pupils are able to use a wide range of materials, including thematic worksheets, pictorial evidence, timelines, writing frames and card-packs, but the lower-attaining pupils have not yet developed a wide enough range of key subject skills, including interpretation of evidence and prioritising of historical issues.
82. Pupils of all levels of attainment make good progress in their first three years in the school. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, in line with others, because their teachers know them well, use appropriate materials, and provide effective guidance in lessons. However, pupils' overall progress is hampered by their weak oral and literary skills. Access to ICT is insufficient to support pupils' understanding of the subject and allow them to present their work well.
83. At GCSE, pupils' results are well below the national average. In class, overall standards are below the national average. The few higher-attaining pupils work at a standard in line with national expectations, and by the end of Year 11 these pupils have developed their analytical skills effectively and achieve well in lessons. For example, Year 11 pupils studying the war in Vietnam were able to interpret, analyse and evaluate sources effectively, and use them to answer examination questions about the impact of certain events on American public opinion. Lower-attaining pupils, who formed a substantial proportion, knew the facts and were able to state them in class, but struggled to move from description to more analytical answers. Overall attainment is hampered by pupils' weak retention skills and examination techniques, and their reading which lacks breadth and depth. These factors, together with weak oracy and literacy, have a negative impact on examination results.
84. Teaching is good overall, across all years, and very good in some lessons. Teachers use their very good subject knowledge to plan a variety of stimulating activities, which strongly engage the attention of all pupils. They develop pupils' research skills and empathy well. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour, and there is appropriate emphasis on inclusion and on literacy. Teachers have an obvious enthusiasm for their subject, and this commitment is strongly communicated to pupils, providing a firm basis for learning. There is a lack of visits to sites of historical interest in Years 7 to 9 to further enhance pupils' interest. Accommodation is just satisfactory, but is not conducive to work.

85. Learning is good. Very good relationships underpin learning: in all years, pupils listen intently to each other, and work well together. In several lessons, pupils worked very effectively in mixed pairs, a grouping thoughtfully employed by the department, mindful of supporting the attainment of both girls and boys. Pupils mostly behave well, with high concentration and focus, although a small, but not insignificant, minority of mainly lower-attaining pupils lack concentration skills, and show challenging behaviour.
86. Leadership and management are good. The recently appointed head of department has produced documents that signal her clarity of vision about the future of the department. She recognises that areas for further development include updating schemes of work; increasing the use of ICT as an aid to learning; the extension of multicultural history; and a continuing emphasis on literacy. The department uses target-setting well and is developing in-class assessment techniques, including self- and peer-assessment, to monitor and evaluate pupils' learning and achievement within individual lessons. The head of department is a good role model of a manager dedicated to raising standards and is supported in this by her colleagues. Overall, there has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection, particularly in recent years, when the rate of improvement has been good.

## Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in GCSE examinations have improved over the past three years.
- The quality of teaching is good overall.
- Geography makes very good contributions to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Geography is one of the two most popular option choices for GCSE in the school.
- The very good ethos and good support for pupils contributes to good achievement.
- Use of assessment data for setting individual targets is not yet established.
- Insufficient access to textbooks and computer resources reduces the rate of learning.

### Commentary

87. In the 2004 GCSE examinations, the percentage of pupils gaining A\* to C grades was below the national average. However, over the past three years, the results have improved by over 50 per cent. The achievement of pupils is good. Teacher assessments for pupils at the end of Year 9 are below average overall, which is confirmed by the work seen during the inspection. However, pupils make good progress from their attainment on entry, indicating good achievement, because of the good teaching and support they receive.
88. The quality of teaching and of learning is good overall, with some examples of very good practice. Lessons are very well planned to show the various stages of progress. Time is allocated for each part and is well managed. Activities generally match the prior attainment of pupils, but occasionally expectations are below what is achievable. The good relationship between staff and pupils provides an incentive for concentrated effort and enjoyment of lessons. An interactive whiteboard in one classroom is used in teaching, but there are no computers for pupils to extend their learning; however, the homework of many pupils contains evidence of competent use at home. In lessons observed on volcanoes and the siting of a reservoir, teachers provided opportunities for pupils to consider seriously the feelings of people whose lives are affected by such changes. The rights and wrongs of tourism development and responsibility for the quality of the environment were discussed sensitively. Pupils work collaboratively in pairs and larger groups, and learn much about other cultures.
89. Leadership and management are both satisfactory. The head of department and colleagues are committed to raising standards, which have improved significantly over the past three years. Schemes of work are in place to meet the needs and interests of the pupils. Year 8

pupils have been engaged in a project to improve the school environment, supported by investigation of its microclimate. Others, including gifted and talented pupils, took part in a market research survey on the regeneration of Purley. Through team effort and the interest and enjoyment of pupils, the subject has become a popular choice for GCSE examinations, well ahead of all other subjects except one. Fieldwork opportunities, including residential trips, are limited. Assessment data is analysed and used well to guide the teaching of different classes, but as yet is not being used to set individual targets and to monitor the progress of pupils. Textbooks are not in sufficient supply to avoid sharing, and the lack of ready access to computers reduces opportunities to extend learning. Steps are being taken to improve resources.

90. Satisfactory improvement has been made since the last inspection. Notably, standards have improved, particularly in the past three years. Teaching in Years 10 and 11 has improved from satisfactory to good overall. The standard of work at the end of Year 9 has improved year on year and is close to average expectations. Self-evaluation and other systems have been introduced, and the work is well organised.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

### **Design and technology**

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

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

- Pupils achieve well in the electronics option in GCSE design and technology; results are well above average
- Pupils' achievement in other GCSE design and technology courses - graphic products, product design and food technology - is unsatisfactory. Results are well below average.
- The quality of teaching and learning in electronics is good.
- There is a legacy of unsatisfactory leadership and management of the department.
- Not enough use is made of computer aided design and manufacturing.
- Accommodation is dated and in poor condition.

#### **Commentary**

91. Standards are below average at the end of Year 9. Achievement by the end of Year 9 is unsatisfactory, because standards on entry in Year 7 are below average, and by the end of Year 9 standards are well below average. In resistant materials and graphics, achievement is unsatisfactory; in food it is satisfactory; and in electronics it is good. The girls do better than the boys. The higher-attaining pupils achieve higher standards, because they can make good quality electronic circuits. Pupils' making skills in resistant materials and graphics are poor, and are not supported with enough design work. The achievement of lower-attaining pupils is also unsatisfactory.
92. Overall, standards in the range of GCSE courses offered in 2004 were well below average, except on the electronics course, where standards were well above average. These overall poor standards can be attributed to unsatisfactory teaching in these areas over the past two years, and poor preparation of pupils for the examinations. Achievement is therefore unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Except for the electronics course, inspection evidence indicates that standards have declined steeply since the last inspection. There are some good examples of pupils' electronic products coursework, such as electronic dice and burglar alarms, made to high standards. Overall, however, pupils perform worse in design and technology than they do in their other subjects.

93. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning seen was satisfactory, with electronics and food lessons being good. The quality of teaching in graphics and product design is barely satisfactory, because new teachers have to take drastic steps to make up for the previous deficiencies in teaching. The situation is therefore, slowly beginning to improve. Teachers' preparation and classroom management are good in electronics and food lessons. The new teachers have good subject knowledge and are enthusiastic about their subject, and these features are beginning to motivate some of the more disaffected pupils. Pupils studying product design and graphics have previously not been receiving constructive comments on their work from teachers, and therefore have not known what to do to improve, particularly in GCSE coursework.
94. A legacy of poor leadership and management means that this aspect remains unsatisfactory. As yet, there is not an effective, cohesive team pulling in the same direction. There is no departmental development plan, and hence unsatisfactory improvement has been made since the last inspection. Until recently, there have been difficulties in recruiting appropriate teachers. Food lessons are rushed, because there is not enough time to prepare, cook and evaluate food products in a single block. The marking of pupils' work has been almost non-existent in the graphics and product design courses, and these pupils have not been provided with enough support. There is insufficient computer aided design and manufacturing, and textiles is not taught in Years 7 to 9. However, a new curriculum leader is now in place, and some improvements are starting to be made.
95. Accommodation is outdated and in need of renovation. There are a number of health and safety issues. Dust extraction systems in the workshop and material preparation areas do not meet current requirements. Machines are located too close together in the workshop. Kitchen units in the food preparation area are worn and outdated. Interim measures have been taken, but these merely reduce access to vital equipment.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

96. Lessons were sampled and results analysed in drama. Standards at the end of Year 9 were below average. Achievement is satisfactory. Higher-attaining pupils take on roles convincingly, but many do not have sufficient self-discipline to work independently. Pupils work co-operatively together, but do not analyse each other's performances fully.
97. Results in GCSE drama have been well above average for the last three years and similar standards were seen at the inspection in Year 11. Pupils achieve very well. This reflects good quality teaching and strong commitment from pupils. Many are talented performers, and they work very well together, refining and improving their dramas. One group in Year 11 used space and movement excellently in their performance. Pupils visit the theatre regularly, and learn from these visits to use techniques such as freeze-frame effectively.
98. Drama makes a good contribution to pupils' extra-curricular education, with regular and well-appreciated public performances, such as *Oliver*.

## **Music**

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Achievement in music in Years 10 and 11 is good.
- Pupils at all stages learn well, because lessons are carefully planned to enable pupils to develop their natural musical abilities.
- Provision for ICT is poor; as a result, this element of the National Curriculum in music for pupils in Years 7 to 9 cannot be taught.

- The low allocation of time for music in Year 8 has an adverse effect on achievement across Years 7 to 9.
- Very few pupils learn to play musical instruments.
- The subject makes a considerable contribution to pupils' personal development.

### **Commentary**

99. Teacher assessments indicate that, by the end of Year 9, pupils' attainment in music is below average. Similar standards were seen during the inspection. Results in the GCSE examination in music were below the national average, although numbers entered are rather low for valid comparison. During the inspection, standards seen were above this level, matching national averages, largely because recent individual support for composing has raised standards significantly.
100. Achievement at the end of Year 9 is satisfactory. Pupils enter the school with below-average attainment in music. As a result of a programme of learning that successfully develops natural musical abilities, they make rapid progress throughout Year 7, achieving well. They become perceptive listeners, express themselves accurately by using appropriate technical terms, synchronise independent lines well when playing in ensembles, and learn to improvise imaginatively over a limited range of notes to contribute original ideas to instrumental arrangements. Because Year 8 lessons take place just once every two weeks, pupils' rate of learning slows significantly. As a result, in Year 9 pupils' instrumental technique is not well developed, their performing is less disciplined, and there is a considerable loss of creative approach. There is no discernible difference in the achievement of boys or girls, or of pupils from different ethnic minority groups. The achievement of pupils who are gifted and talented is similar to other pupils'. Pupils with special educational needs often achieve better than other pupils, because of the high quality of support they receive. In Years 10 and 11, achievement is good. The few pupils who have instrumental lessons perform well. Pupils with skills in singing, guitar, keyboard and drum-kit build well on their natural musical abilities, and refine their technique by copying chosen role models. Lower-attaining pupils perform at a basic but competent level. Pupils achieve very well in composing, as result of recently introduced individual tuition. However, because of their generally narrow experience of music, most lack confidence in meeting the demands of the listening examination.
101. Teaching and learning are good, and during the inspection several very good and excellent lessons were seen. Pupils respond confidently to the teacher's encouraging, well-informed approach. Objectives are clear, expectations are high but attainable, topics are well planned to relate to pupils' own experience and natural musical abilities, and pupils are inspired and exhilarated by the energy of the activities. Pupils develop a wide range of musical skills and increase their self-esteem. However, they are not given enough opportunities to evaluate their own and each other's work, in order to improve their independence as learners. Opportunities for teaching and learning are limited by lack of access to computers.
102. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There is a very good system for supporting and monitoring teaching and learning, but other professional development is limited. The assessment system is properly linked to national criteria for pupils in Years 7 to 9, and to GCSE examination criteria, but needs further development to involve pupils in self-assessment. There is a good, relevant scheme of work, but the requirements of the National Curriculum cannot be met in full, because computers in the department are obsolete. The department's development plan does not contain strategies for improving ICT, or for redressing the shortfall in staffing in Years 7 to 9 that has led to the reduction in time for the subject in Year 8. Since the previous inspection, the quality and sufficiency of classroom instruments has greatly improved. The innovative arrangement of providing individual tuition in composing for pupils in Year 11 has been highly successful, but, as at the time of the previous inspection, too few pupils learn to play instruments.

103. Instrumental and vocal groups rehearse on a regular basis, and the annual musical production involves large numbers of pupils. From time to time, pupils entertain in the local community, and some have performed in the Fairfield Halls.
104. Overall, improvement is just satisfactory since the previous inspection. Improvement has been good both in teaching and learning, and in resources, but there has been no improvement in ICT provision, or in the development of instrumental tuition. The work of the department has been put at a disadvantage by the timetabling arrangements in Years 7 to 9.

## **Art and design**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils in Years 10 and 11 achieve well.
- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' moral and cultural development.
- There have been recent staffing difficulties due to illness.
- In the best lessons, methods and materials are active and interesting.
- Leadership of the subject is good.
- There are no computers in the teaching rooms.

### **Commentary**

105. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 progress well and their achievement at the end of Year 11 is good, because teaching and learning in those years is good. Pupils learn to work effectively in painting, drawing and construction. Their composition is strong, and they create imaginative work by mixing up-to-date scenes with those of the Italian Renaissance. They work well in chalk pastel, and their still-life drawings show a growing knowledge of proportion and perspective. Their constructions in card are well made, and effectively explore the shapes made by the human figure in motion. Pupils use sketchbooks regularly for drawing and for research, but do not use them enough to experiment with different materials and processes. Standards at the end of Year 11 are below average, matching GCSE results for 2004, but these pupils began secondary education with considerably lower prior attainment.
106. In Years 7 to 9, pupils work well with colour, and create lively patterns from looping and swirling lines. They produce watercolour paintings based on a study of the Impressionists, applying the paint fluidly and confidently. They also make humorous sculptures of mythical creatures and animals, using wire and paper well. Their drawing, however, lacks confidence and fluency, especially when using pencil. Standards at the end of Year 9 are below average, and pupils' achievement is just satisfactory. Recent staffing difficulties, due to illness, have meant that pupils have had different teachers too often. As a result, projects are not always followed through, and some tasks are too short term to develop pupils' ideas fully. This inconsistency is why achievement in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory, but not better, and achievement overall is satisfactory.
107. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' moral and cultural development. For example, they have created attractive comic books, based on the exploits of superheroes, which show people overcoming difficulties or fighting crime. They visit art galleries, and study a wide range of work, including cave painting, the art of other cultures and modern sculpture. In addition, art clubs after school help extend these studies into photography and construction.
108. Teaching and learning overall are satisfactory. The quality is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11, where teachers regularly succeed in managing and motivating pupils well. In the best lessons, methods are active and interesting. For example, in a lesson on sculpture, pupils cut and bent card and paper, taping and gluing the pieces to make large, free-standing figures. They showed good levels of interest, and enjoyed working with the



materials. Good learning was the result. Lessons are also well planned, and teachers often give good individual advice to pupils. However, in a small number of lessons in Years 7 to 9, pupils do not listen carefully enough to what the teacher has to say, and take too long to settle, slowing the pace and leading to learning that is no better than satisfactory.

109. Leadership of the subject is good. Staff are encouraged to develop their areas of strength, and there is a strong sense of teamwork in the department. Management is satisfactory; planning is not fully up-to-date due to illness. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory: strengths in the teaching have been maintained, and assessment practice is now good in Years 10 and 11.
110. There are no computers in the art teaching rooms, and as a result ICT is not used often enough in Years 7 to 9 to extend pupils' work fully: pupils cannot research projects and modify their own ideas while they work on their drawing and painting.

## Physical education

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good
- Achievement across Years 7 to 11 is satisfactory.
- The increase in numbers taking GCSE is mirrored by a steady improvement in results.
- New facilities, built since the last inspection, have improved opportunities within the curriculum and extra-curricular programme.
- Pupils' understanding of the context of attack and defence in different games is underdeveloped.
- Limited use is made of assessment information to aid individual improvement.

### Commentary

111. By Year 9, standards of practical work are generally average in a range of games, athletics and swimming. In cricket, tennis and rounders, skills are developing well, but are not always matched by an understanding of attack and defence principles of play. While some boys lack control in making shots in tennis and cricket, others are at an advanced stage and need greater competitive challenge. Pupils demonstrate good natural ability in athletics, but the focus on acquiring techniques is not always accompanied with understanding of why that particular technique can benefit performance. Achievement across Years 7 to 9 for pupils as a whole is satisfactory, where units of work build on previous experience. All pupils extend their performance in swimming in groups.
112. Standards in core physical education by Year 11 are generally average, with many pupils making sound progress in rounders and volleyball. Units of work in these activities allow pupils to acquire and develop their skills further, but the development of different roles, such as coaching, officiating and evaluating performance, is limited, and is a legacy of the poor facilities they experienced at an earlier stage.
113. GCSE results in 2004 were well below national averages for the subject. However, over recent years there has been a steady increase in the number of pupils gaining A\* to C grades. With the current Year 11, indications are that results will be better still; the numbers opting to take GCSE have also increased, with more girls taking the subject. Most boys show accuracy in 'spiking' in volleyball, and their knowledge of rules and tactical considerations in the game is also developing. Standards of work in theory are in line with pupils' academic potential; most showed appropriate understanding of the different types of sporting injuries. However, willingness to be involved in oral discussion is not always followed up by making relevant notes.

114. Achievement and endeavour across Years 7 to 11 are satisfactory, although performance in some girls' groups in Year 10 is held back because they are very passive. Overall, the incidence of non-participation has drastically reduced in recent years, and is now minimal. A growing number of boys and girls develop and refine their skills in the extra-curricular sports programme which is benefiting from improved facilities, external coaches and links with the neighbouring sports college. After-school clubs encourage participation and development of skills for those who wish to play competitively. However, in Years 9 to 11, too many pupils do not meet the National Curriculum aspiration of two hours of physical activity per week.
115. Teaching and learning overall are good. All teaching is at least satisfactory and there is a significant proportion that is good; occasionally the quality is very good. Across Years 7 to 11, teaching and learning are very good where there are challenging objectives and teachers provide stimulating demonstration and planned progressions at brisk pace, with a variety of tasks. In Year 7, teaching was very good when it constantly challenged girls to develop their front crawl breathing action in swimming through a range of different tasks, appropriate to the different abilities. While some pupils were able to co-ordinate the bi-lateral sequence, others were at least able to develop better breathing actions on one side; a high work rate and brisk pace were maintained throughout. Teachers' use of assessment information to structure groups, set individual targets and inform teaching is limited. Teachers are good role models and often offer inspiration by demonstration.
116. Leadership and management of the department are satisfactory. There is a clear designation of roles and responsibilities, which means that overall provision for sport in the school is satisfactory. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. The development of links with the local sports college is a worthwhile initiative, and the role of the sports co-ordinator is benefiting the department and enhancing the continuity of the physical education programme. Other significant improvements since the last inspection include the new sports hall, which has significantly improved indoor teaching provision, and the increased number of pupils selecting GCSE physical education.

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

Provision in **personal, social and health education** was sampled. There are good links with the citizenship programme and the work in careers, resulting in a coherent, structured programme running from Year 7 to Year 11. The work in personal, social and health education has been extended to much-improved transition arrangements from feeder primary schools, and this approach has been adopted by the borough. Arrangements in personal, social and health education, citizenship and careers exemplify the schools commitment to educating the whole child.

### **Citizenship**

Provision in citizenship is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A rich range of opportunities is provided across the school in which pupils can participate and take responsible action.
- Specific citizenship teaching is of good quality.
- Provision is well structured, and complemented by work in personal, social and health education and careers.
- Contributions from some subjects are not yet fully exploited.

### **Commentary**

117. In Years 7 to 11, pupils demonstrate above average standards in their levels of participation and responsible action in citizenship. Their knowledge and understanding about being informed citizens are appropriate for their age, and this is reinforced by a strong sense of

community in the school. Understanding the consequences of actions is a developing theme, both in lessons and in the wider life of the school. The school discipline and reward system, recently introduced, has served to strengthen this further. Most pupils are developing their skills of enquiry and communication, due to experience across a number of curriculum areas, particularly ICT, drama and history. Overall, achievement is good.

118. Much is attempted within the citizenship curriculum and the wider life of the school to broaden pupils' horizons and modify behaviour and attitudes. There is a very high level of expectation that pupils will become involved in school- and community-based activities. For example, in Year 10 lesson, the democratic election process is first explained, and then experienced through a tutor-group based election. Pupils were invited to apply for posts of responsibility in the school, through a rigorous application and interview process. In some groups of lower-attaining pupils in Years 7 to 9, low levels of oracy prevent pupils from attaining levels in debate, discussion and writing that match national expectations.
119. Teaching and learning are good overall, with a significant proportion very good. The best lessons are characterised by thorough planning, and clear protocols for the behaviour of the group are established at the outset. Research into the topic is carried out by the pupils, who report their findings through discussion, as in the session about motivation and responsibilities for coursework demands in Year 10. In the majority of lessons, teachers work hard to draw out ideas from the pupils, some of whom lack confidence in expressing their views. A major strength is teachers' knowledge of their pupils, which allows them to be sensitive to individuals when discussing controversial issues. In some lessons, input by outside visitors has a significant impact, such as the Year 11 lesson where a local police officer led a session on crime and the legal system.
120. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The citizenship curriculum is very well structured, and the school's role as a community within a wider community is emphasised, ensuring that citizenship is not only taught, but also experienced and practised. It is rare to find this crucial aspect so well developed. There are school council representatives in every tutor group, with democratic elections for these posts. In Year 10, pupils operate as 'peer mediators' for lower-school pupils. In Year 11, some pupils who meet certain criteria are selected as prefects, while others take on other roles and responsibilities across the school; all must go through a structured selection process, which also helps them prepare for life in the wider community. The use of formal assessment is at an early stage, and is not yet used to influence teaching or to inform parents. However, teaching styles are such that informal evaluation of pupils' learning takes place regularly as an integral part of lessons. The absence of whole-school in-service training for staff has meant that citizenship outcomes are not always highlighted or dealt with fully in some subjects, even though the quality of support from others is very good. Overall improvement in the subject since the last inspection has been very good.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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