

INSPECTION REPORT

GEORGE GREEN'S SCHOOL

Isle of Dogs, London

LEA area: London Borough of Tower Hamlets

Unique reference number: 100974

Headteacher: Mrs Kenny Frederick

Lead inspector: Mr Martin Pavey

Dates of inspection: 22 – 25 November 2004

Inspection number: 268810

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 controlled
Age range of students:	11 – 19
Gender of students:	Mixed
Number on roll:	1211
School address:	100 Manchester Road Isle of Dogs London
Postcode:	E14 3DW
Telephone number:	020 7987 6032
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of Governors:	Dr Harriet Jones
Date of previous inspection:	23 November 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This comprehensive school for boys and girls aged 11-18 is in the Isle of Dogs, East London. It is a voluntary controlled school, with a long association with the Worshipful Company of Shipwrights. There are 651 boys and 560 girls in the school. These numbers include the sixth form, with 143 students in Year 12 and 32 in Year 13. Students come from a wide range of heritage backgrounds. Just under a half are from White backgrounds and a further third from Asian backgrounds, largely Bangladeshi. Black, Chinese and other backgrounds are also represented. The percentage of students whose home language is not English (46.8 per cent) is very high, and 20 of these students are at an early stage in learning English. The percentage of students with special educational needs (SEN) is 22.5 per cent, above the national average. The percentage of students with statements of SEN is 7.3 per cent, well above the national average. The percentage of those eligible for free school meals (54.4 per cent) is well above average.

Students come from a range of social and economic backgrounds, but the above figures and those for the surrounding area confirm that many students come from backgrounds with a high level of disadvantage. A higher than average number of students join and leave the school at other than the usual times. Students' attainment on entry is overall below the national average level, and for some it is well below average.

Since the last inspection, numbers have increased by nearly 300 students. The school has achieved specialist status as a training school and an emerging full service school, providing an increasing range of services for the local community.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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12682	Jim Griffin	Lay inspector	
8139	Barbara Johnstone	Team inspector	Music
8696	Abul Maula	Team inspector	Bengali
12179	Laurence Moscrop	Team inspector	Religious education Citizenship
16950	Caroline Orr	Team inspector	English as an additional language Modern foreign language European and community languages
6432	Mick Sewter	Team inspector	Science
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10666	Patricia Wheeler	Team inspector	History Business education – Sixth form
12048	Richard Patterson	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Work-related learning
20497	Vernon Williams	Team inspector	Geography Media Production – Sixth form
1085	John Laver	Team inspector	Physical education History – Sixth form
8552	Wallis Hart	Team inspector	Design and technology Design and technology – Sixth form
12121	Jack Mallinson	Team inspector	English English – Sixth form Drama
3731	William Robson	Team inspector	Special educational needs Special educational needs Unit Community Provision
31688	Brian McGonagle	Team inspector	Art and design
32169	Bob O'Hagan	Team inspector	Politics – Sixth form Economics – Sixth form

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school with many very good and excellent features. The leadership of the Governors and Principal is excellent. Teaching is good and students learn well. Results are below average, but students' achievement is satisfactory in the main school and good in the sixth form. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Clear and principled leadership from Governors and Principal has created an improving school with very good relationships and harmony between students.
- The school provides very good equality of opportunity, so that all students are very strongly included in its community and the education it provides. Provision for those with special educational needs (SEN) and those learning English as an additional language (EAL) is very good.
- Teaching is good, so that students generally learn well. Support staff provide a very good service. The school's status as a training school gives all staff excellent opportunities for professional development.
- Students do not always take enough initiative and responsibility to improve their standards, despite all the help they get. Behaviour is sometimes distracting. Teachers do not always expect enough of them or challenge them sufficiently.
- Care for students, and for their welfare, safety and guidance, is very good.
- Links with the community are excellent and are having a positive effect on students' attitudes, personal development and achievement.
- Business studies and drama are very strong subjects.
- The sixth form provides a good education. It is a growing and well integrated part of the school.
- Skills of numeracy are not well enough developed across the curriculum.
- Targets for students' academic improvement are well established, but could be more challenging.
- Financial management is already good, but the school needs to improve business and financial systems in this complex school with a very large annual budget.

Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Standards have been maintained and improved. Key issues have been well addressed. There have been major improvements in the community provision of the school, the buildings and the scope and competence of the sixth form.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Note: Year 13 A/AS grades compared with all schools in 2004 have not yet been published. The D grade below is therefore estimated.

Performance compared with:		all schools			similar schools
		2002	2003	2004	2004
Year 11	GCSE/GNVQ examinations	D	E	D	C
Year 13	A/AS level and VCE examinations	E	E	D	

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
For Year 11, similar schools are those whose students attained similarly at the end of Year 9.*

Achievement is satisfactory in Years 7-11 and good in the sixth form. When students join the school, their attainment is below the nationally expected level. Over Years 7-11, they make satisfactory progress, although results in tests and examinations remain below average. Those receiving special help make good progress. In the sixth form, students make good progress, particularly in business studies, which is a very strong subject.

In the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, attainment is below average in Years 7-11, but achievement is satisfactory. In English, though test and examination results are below average, achievement is satisfactory. Students handle language well and present work imaginatively. GCSE students know their texts well. In mathematics, results in tests and examinations have been below average, but are improving. Students' achievement is satisfactory. In work seen, standards in Year 9 were not far below average. Mathematical skills, which were weak on entry, have often developed well. During the GCSE course, tasks are conscientiously completed, though they contain few imaginative or independent ideas. In science, students make satisfactory progress over Years 7-11. Results in tests and examinations have steadily improved, but are still below the national average. During the inspection, standards in Year 9 were generally at the expected level, although those seen at the end of Year 11 were below.

Students' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Generally, students in Years 7-11 have good attitudes towards school and satisfactory attitudes in lessons. Students behave well and relationships are very good. Punctuality is satisfactory, although attendance is still unsatisfactory. Sixth formers' behaviour is very good and they show good attitudes towards school and their work. Their attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good quality of education. Teaching is good in all years, so that students generally learn well. Teachers' assessment of students' work is good. The curriculum is good. The school provides a broad range of opportunities, including a very good programme of activities beyond the school day. Accommodation and resources for learning are good. The school cares very well for its students. It gives them very good support, advice and guidance. Procedures for care, welfare, health and safety are very good. Links with parents are very good. Links with the community are excellent. Links with other schools and colleges are good overall.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. Leadership from the Principal is excellent. It is excellent from Governors in everything apart from the statutory item noted below. Leadership and management from senior staff are very good. These have led to an improving, popular and respected school with a very wide range of community activities.

Governors have not ensured that the school complies with statutory requirements in providing a daily act of collective worship for all students.

PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Views at the parents' meeting before the inspection were generally positive, though there were criticisms about progress, homework and communication. Overall views in the 402 questionnaires returned were positive. Parents were pleased about most aspects, including progress, teaching, expectations of hard work, and leadership and management. A minority was not happy with behaviour and information on their child's progress. Inspectors have found that behaviour and homework are satisfactory, though there is some misbehaviour in lessons. They feel that parents are very well informed about progress and events in the school. Students' views, in interview and questionnaires, were positive overall. Many students are very proud of their school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Increase expectations of what students can achieve, to improve their initiative and responsibility in learning,
- Improve students' skills in using mathematics, across the curriculum,
- Increase the challenge made in the system of regular target setting,
- Improve business and financial systems in this large and complex school,

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Provide a daily act of collective worship for all students.

SIXTH FORM SUMMARY REPORT

There are now 175 students in the George Green's Sixth Form. Until recently, most students studied academic courses to AS and A2 levels. A growing range of vocational courses, at intermediate, foundation and entry levels has now been introduced into Year 12. As a result, the student numbers in Year 12 are over four times greater than in Year 13. A few students take a mixture of academic and vocational courses. Whilst the majority of students join from within the school, over a third now join from other schools. There are 39 students with statements of SEN in the sixth form, mostly taking entry level vocational courses.

OVERALL EVALUATION

The sixth form provides a good education for its students. Standards on entry are below those typically found. Students achieve well, although results are below average. The retention rate within sixth form courses is generally high. Most of the A2 students proceed to higher education, whilst the majority of students on vocational courses move to a higher level course. Students play a positive part in school life. Teaching is good overall. Leadership and management by the head of sixth and tutors are very good, whilst it is good at departmental levels. The sixth form is cost effective and provides good value for money.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The quality and range of business courses are a very positive feature.
- The leadership of the sixth form is very good.
- Teaching and students' learning and achievement are good.
- Students confirm that they are very well supported, with very good academic advice and guidance.
- Most students show good attitudes to school and work, and behave very well.
- The curriculum is good overall, but science and a wider range of vocational options would further improve it.
- The sixth form does not meet the statutory requirement of providing a daily act of collective worship.
- Students with complex learning difficulties achieve very well, due to the very good provision.

QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES OF THE CURRICULUM

Judgements about the provision in the subjects and courses inspected in the sixth form are shown below. They are based mainly on the quality of teaching and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects in the sixth form were inspected.

Curriculum area	Evaluation
English, languages and communication	English. Good. Standards are above the national average. Teaching, learning and achievement are good.
Mathematics	Mathematics. Satisfactory. Standards are below the national average. Teaching, learning and achievement are satisfactory.
Information and communication technology (ICT)	ICT. Good. Standards are below the national average. Teaching and learning are good and achievement is satisfactory.
Humanities	History. Good. Standards are in line with the national average. Teaching, learning and achievement are good. Politics. Good. Standards are below the national average. Teaching and learning are very good and students' achievement

is good.

Engineering, technology and manufacturing	Design and technology. Satisfactory. Standards are below the national average. Teaching and learning are good and achievement is satisfactory.
Visual and performing arts and media	Media studies. Good. Standards are broadly in line with the national average. Teaching, learning and achievement are all good.
Business	Business education. Very good. Standards are well above the national average in GNVQ and A2 examinations. Teaching and learning are good and achievement is very good. Economics. Satisfactory. Standards are well below the national average, as students' skills are weak. Teaching, learning and achievement are all satisfactory.

The curriculum areas are broadly common across all post-16 education and training. They do not necessarily correspond with subjects and courses taught by the school. Inspectors make judgements in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. Excellent and very good are equivalent to the judgement 'outstanding' in further education and sixth form college reports; poor and very poor are equivalent to 'very weak'.

ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

The inspection confirmed that support is very good. Students get frequent and very effective information on their progress and on what they need to do to improve. The guidance on future courses and careers is good. Students are very well known as individuals.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

Overall **leadership and management are very good.** Departmental leadership and management are good. Performance data are carefully analysed and used well to track students' progress. As at the time of the previous inspection report, there is no act of daily collective worship for sixth formers, although an assembly of good quality was observed.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Students are positive about provision in the sixth form. They appreciate the way staff treat them as young adults and the way their views are heard and considered. They talk positively about the commitment and enthusiasm of their teachers and the very good social atmosphere among students. Students value the ready access to reliable computers. They would recommend the sixth form to others.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Note:

Attainment answers the question, 'how high are standards?' This means the actual standards students have reached, when compared with the national average in tests and examinations. It is also used to explain the average level expected nationally on entry to the school, or the level of work seen during an inspection.

Achievement answers the question, 'are standards for individual students high enough?' This means the level students have reached, based on the progress they have made in relation to how capable they are.

When students join the school, their attainment is below the nationally expected level. Over Years 7-11, they make satisfactory progress, although results in tests and examinations remain below average. Those receiving special help make good progress. In the sixth form, students make good progress, particularly in business studies, which is a very strong subject. Results in sixth form A2 examinations rose considerably in 2004, when they were not far below the national average for 2003 for the top grades A and B.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students receiving help for SEN and those at an early stage of learning make good progress.
- Results in the A2 examinations have improved and sixth formers make good progress in their work.
- Results in business studies at all levels are above average. Results in GCSE drama are well above average.
- Standards in the key skills of literacy and numeracy are below average and could be improved.

Commentary

1. When students join the school, their overall attainment is below, sometimes well below, the national average. There are relatively few students of above average ability and a higher than average proportion below or well below.
2. Between 2001 and 2003, results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 were well below the national average in each of the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, for both boys and girls. Over the three years, these results were very low when compared to those of students in schools with a similar starting point. However, results improved in 2004, although remaining well below the 2003 national average. Results in mathematics showed a greater improvement than those in science or English. Results in tests at the end of Year 9 in 2004 indicate that these students made satisfactory progress over Years 7-9 when compared with the achievement of students with a similar starting point.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 9 – average point scores in2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	N/A (29.8)	N/A (33.4)
mathematics	33.7 (31.6)	35.5 (35.4)
science	30.9 (29.0)	33.1 (33.6)

There were 208 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year. Figures for English are not yet available.

3. GCSE results were well below the national average in points scored in 2003. Results for students attaining five or more passes at grades A* to C were well below the national average at 25 per cent. However, when compared with the results which students achieved in similar schools in 2003, results were average for the proportion achieving five or more passes at grades A*-C, and well above average for the average total points scored.
4. GCSE results improved considerably in 2004. The percentage gaining five or more GCSE passes at grades A* to C rose to 34. Despite these results remaining well below the national average, these students achieved results similar to those of students in other schools with the same starting point. The proportion of students gaining five GCSE grades A* to G (95 per cent) was well above average both nationally and for similar schools. No student failed to obtain at least one GCSE grade. Overall, GCSE results reflect satisfactory progress over the course.
5. In tests at the end of Year 9 in 2003, boys' performance was below that of girls, though there was little difference in GCSE that year. In tests at the end of Year 9 in 2004, there was little difference in the performance of boys and girls in mathematics and science. Unconfirmed results for English indicate that girls outperformed boys. In GCSE in 2004, girls did considerably better than boys in achieving grades A*-C, and girls did much better than boys in history. In the 2003 GCSE examinations, White British students performed less well than Bengali students, but the gap narrowed in 2004. The small numbers of Chinese and Central European students performed well. The performance of Black students has varied from year to year.
6. During the inspection, in lessons seen and work inspected, standards were mostly below the expected national levels, in all years. However, they were around the expected levels in mathematics, science and modern languages, rose to this level in geography in Years 10-11, and were well above the expected level in drama. Students' achievement seen during the inspection was satisfactory overall, but was good in history, and improved to good in geography in Years 10-11. In drama, achievement was good in Years 7-9 and excellent in Years 10-11. The achievement seen in lessons was at least satisfactory and often good – sometimes very good. This indicates that students were often making good gains in learning in their individual lessons, and suggests that their achievement, if sustained in coursework and examinations, could well produce higher results than have yet been gained.
7. Standards of writing are below nationally expected levels in most subjects. Standards of reading are average, while standards of speaking can be above expected levels. Numeracy skills are well developed in mathematics, but are generally below the expected levels across subjects and are in need of better planning and co-ordination. Attainment in ICT across the curriculum is improving, but remains below the expected level. ICT resources are now satisfactory and improving, as is general staff confidence and skills in using the technology. Teachers routinely use ICT to improve students' independent learning and self-esteem.
8. Students receiving support for their SEN achieve well. Those with more severe needs often make faster individual progress than other students because of the very good support that they receive from teaching assistants in all subjects. In Years 10 and 11, students on the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) course for bronze and silver awards achieve very well; those with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties make good progress towards their specific targets. Students with specific literacy difficulties achieve well when they are withdrawn from lessons for specialist tuition in small classes. However, their progress over time is only satisfactory, because the tuition is not frequent enough. A few

students with speech and language difficulties make slow progress, as work in small groups does not meet their needs well enough.

9. More able and talented students achieve well overall. They achieve better than other students in physical education, where several begin to study for GCSE in Year 9 and take the examination in Year 10. They also achieve well in mathematics, music and religious education. In English, French and ICT, achievement is only satisfactory, because teachers do not challenge them sufficiently in lessons. However, the modern languages department has successfully entered more able students early for GCSE French for several years. In design and technology, teachers provide opportunities for these students to take independent responsibility, but students do not make the most of this because they lack confidence in their ability.
10. Students at an early stage of learning English make good progress. At whatever time in the term they arrive, early learners are tested carefully on entry and receive very good support from well qualified EAL support teachers. In addition, early learners take part in a 'buddy' system that teams beginners in English with students using the same home language. This form of help, including the academic mentoring given by Year 10 students to Year 7 students, represents a very good level of individual support. The continuous monitoring of EAL students' progress throughout their school career sometimes reveals startlingly good performance in external examinations.
11. The school's excellent links with the community are beginning to improve students' achievement. For example, the wide range of out of school learning activities enables those students who attend regularly to make significantly better progress than their peers. Extra support for Black students who had been identified as underachieving, has involved close links with parents and has resulted in a much better standard of coursework and homework from these students. Students with SEN have benefited from extra support from students acting as teaching assistants.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	34 (25)	53.4 (52)
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	98 (85)	88.4 (91)
Percentage of students gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	98 (97)	95.8 (96)
Average point score per student (best eight subjects)	29.7 (27.5)	282.3 (34.7)

There were 161 students in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year. The national point score is calculated on a new basis from 2004; the school's score is calculated on the previous basis.

12. In the last two years, the school has not achieved the targets for performance in national tests and examinations agreed with the local education authority. These targets have been higher than the school could reasonably achieve, in terms of results in recent years.

Sixth form

13. In 2003, results in the A2 level examinations taken at the end of Year 13 were well below the national average overall – well below average for boys and very low for girls. Results in the AS examinations taken at the end of Year 12 were below average overall, but not far below the average for grades A-B. Vocational results in business and performing arts were also below average.

14. A considerable improvement took place in 2004. Entries doubled for A2, and the percentage of A-B grades rose from 20 to 35, a figure not far below the national average. For AS, the proportion of grades A-B were much as in 2003, but the overall pass rate improved considerably to just above the national average. The school has calculated considerable

added value in its A2 results in 2004, particularly in English, performing arts, ICT, media studies and business studies. Results in business studies, covering a large range of examinations and levels, are particularly strong, and are a strength of the sixth form.

15. Students with complex SEN achieve very well. They benefit from very good teaching on a range of well chosen, entry-level vocational courses.

16. The range and inclusiveness of the sixth form population are considerable, and the qualifications offered are relevant to the needs of a great range of students. This, with good teaching and attitudes to work, has led to the good achievement and progress seen in sixth form work during this inspection. The school's excellent community programme has played an active part in raising aspirations and improving progress. For example, the Millennium Volunteers programme has boosted students' achievement whilst forging closer links between the school and local community. Many students have gained awards for completing 200 hours of community service, but they have also developed their own skills. For example, performing arts students produced their own talent show. By training for junior and community sports leader awards, students have developed their skill in a wide range of sports, as well as helping younger students. Volunteers from the business community have mentored individual students on the business education course, improving their understanding of interview technique and strategic project planning.

Standards in GCE A/AS level and VCE examinations at the end of Year 13 in 2003

	School results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	72.1 (79.3)	89.4 (92.6)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	11.8 (12.3)	32.6 (35.3)
Average point score per student	132.5 (135.4)	258.2 (263.3)

There were 24 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

17. Overall, improvement across the school since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Results have risen in line with the national trends in the tests at the end of Year 9, and the measure of value added by the school over the two years from these tests to GCSE has been good. Sixth form results in A2 examinations have improved this year, and students were achieving well and making good progress during this inspection.

Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Generally, students in Years 7-11 have good attitudes towards school and satisfactory attitudes in lessons. Students behave well and relationships are very good. Students' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Punctuality is satisfactory,

although attendance is still unsatisfactory. Sixth formers' behaviour is very good and they show good attitudes towards school and their work. Their attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In lessons, students respond well in practical subjects and sessions.
- Very harmonious relationships among students of all ethnic backgrounds are a very positive feature.
- The school's measures to prevent and deal with incidents of racism or bullying are very effective.
- Fixed term exclusion rates are significantly below the levels typically found, since the introduction of an arrangement for internal exclusion.
- Whilst improving, attendance levels of Year 7-11 students are still below the national median level.

- Most sixth formers show good attitudes to their courses and behave very well.
- Sixth formers make a positive contribution to the life of the school.

Commentary

18. Students' attitudes to school are satisfactory overall. Most students are proud of their school and enjoy attending. They are positive about the commitment of their teachers and other staff, the friendships they make with peers and the good resources, especially computers. However, many express dissatisfaction about the occasional disruption to lessons, caused by a small minority of students. In lessons, students respond particularly well when expectations are high, teaching is enriched with purposeful visual aids, and they are able to engage in a variety of practical activities, for example in art and design and physical education. In contrast, students show the least interest in lessons that are dominated by listening to the teacher and copying materials from the board. There is no evidence of any antipathy to learning, and students say they are comfortable talking together about what they have learned. However, a minority in all year groups, largely boys, is noticeably slow to start individual work and works at a slow pace, without enough interest or enthusiasm.
19. During the inspection, students' behaviour in lessons was good overall. Discussions with students reveal that some distraction or disruption to learning occurs in all year groups in a small minority of lessons. The school has good arrangements to minimise the disruption this causes, by removing offenders to a room supervised by senior staff. Outside lessons, a generally orderly atmosphere prevails, supported by a very good level of supervision. Isolated incidents of pushing, shoving and play-fighting cause occasional concern to some students. The school has very effective measures to prevent and deal with bullying or racist incidents. As a result, racist incidents are now almost unknown and bullying incidents are rare. The school is rightly proud of its impressive work to eliminate racism. This has included taking students with racist attitudes on a residential five day conflict resolution course in Northern Ireland. Very harmonious relationships, among students of all ethnic backgrounds, are now a very positive feature.
20. Students with SEN have positive attitudes. They have very good relationships with the teachers and assistants from the teaching and learning support faculty. In Years 10 and 11, they respond positively to chances of responsibility on the ASDAN course and develop their personal and social skills very well. Some students' behavioural, social and emotional difficulties result in inappropriate behaviour in lessons. However, they respond well to extra support and guidance from teaching assistants and other support staff.
21. The school's excellent community links have a very positive effect on students' relationships, attitudes and personal development. The employment of well-trained, supportive supervisors, many of whom previously attended the school or are parents of current students, ensures good behaviour around the school outside lesson time. The school's youth and community manager helps students to resolve difficulties through a process of conflict resolution. However, he also recognises that some poor behaviour stems from boredom and therefore ensures that all students are aware of activities available through the Docklands Youth Service. This provision represents an excellent link between the school and local youth community, with real benefits for managing behaviour and developing positive attitudes to school. Through the Island Youth Forum, students have good opportunities to influence developments in the local community. A group of Year 8 students from the school council recently gave a presentation on how to deal with bullying. Positive attitudes are further encouraged through the monthly Jack Petchey awards to deserving students, sponsored by a local businessman.

Exclusions

22. For the school year 2003-04, the fixed term exclusion rate was below typical levels found nationally. The fixed term exclusion rate has been reduced to a fifth of previous levels, with the introduction of the internal exclusion room. The main reasons for fixed term exclusions were verbal abuse to adults and persistent, disruptive behaviour. There were no permanent exclusions – a very good record.

Ethnic background of students

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of students on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	531	24	0
White – Irish	7	0	0
White – any other White background	52	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	32	5	0
Mixed – White and Black African	6	1	0
Mixed – White and Asian	7	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	7	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	6	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	17	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	386	4	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	11	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	24	1	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	5	0	0
Chinese	37	0	0
Any other ethnic group	25	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	13	0	0

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

Attendance

23. Attendance has risen in recent years. For Year 7-11 students, the table below provides attendance and absence data for the latest complete reporting year, when the attendance was below the national average. Unauthorised absence was above the national median.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	7.7	School data:	1.3

National data:	7.2
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National data:	1.1
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The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year (2002-03).

24. The school's measures to combat absence have substantially improved in the current year and are now very good. With the help of the education welfare officer, an overall action plan was created and a full time attendance officer introduced. Systematic first day contact with home in the event of absence, a greater emphasis on recognising high individual and form attendance and closer monitoring, are the key improvements. As a result, the overall attendance level has increased sharply in the current year to date. Punctuality is satisfactory, well supported by the high visibility of staff before the start of the school day. No overall data was available on truancy, but the practice of taking a register during each lesson is an important preventative measure.
25. Lessons in most subjects make positive contributions to students' good moral and social development. Most students are noticeably calm, mature and well mannered. When questioned in groups, students generally listen well and respect different views. Teachers can therefore rely on most students to work sensibly in pairs and small groups. Nearly all students have a well developed sense of right and wrong and of what is fair. They hold the rewards system in high regard and fully support the school's sanctions, where needed. Students justifiably talk of the confidence they get from teachers. Older students exercise responsibility for themselves and others in a sensible way.
26. Students' cultural development is good, overall. Assemblies, personal, social and health education, music, art and drama lessons make important contributions to students' very good multi-cultural development. Students' adequate understanding of their own culture is aided significantly by visits to local museums, theatres and direct involvement in sports events. Inspectors nevertheless noted a surprising lack of awareness among students of the significant places of interest in Greenwich, which is directly across the river from the school. Students' spiritual development is satisfactory overall. There are good opportunities for reflection in assemblies, but there is significant variation in the contribution made by lessons, in different subjects. Whilst drama, music and geography make positive contributions, the contribution of science and mathematics lessons to students' spiritual development is under-developed.

Sixth form

27. Most students enjoy the sixth form and appreciate the support offered by their teachers. Teachers are friendly, accessible and helpful about problems. Their enthusiasm for their subjects raises students' interest and encourages them to do well. In most lessons, students listen well and show good levels of interest, concentration and determination. Students' behaviour is very good. Relationships are very good.
28. The school's community programmes give sixth formers very good opportunities for responsibility. For example, the learning challenge scheme gives trained sixth formers the chance to mentor younger students, from which everyone benefits greatly. Most sixth formers are trained Millennium Volunteers who help staff and do community work outside school. Students take an active part in a number of clubs, perform to the whole school and take a leading part in talent shows.
29. Students with complex special needs have very positive attitudes and develop excellent relationships with teachers, support staff and each other. They develop their personal and social skills very well and become much more confident and independent during their time in school.

30. Attendance and punctuality are broadly satisfactory. The practice of expecting students to arrive at school for registration at the start of the day is generally effective. Around half the students receive educational maintenance allowances. These have a positive impact on attendance, since in order to qualify students must avoid all forms of unauthorised absence as well as meet deadlines in relation to homework and coursework.
31. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Positive standards in attitudes and behaviour have been maintained at all levels. Attendance has improved and exclusions have been greatly reduced.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality of education. Teaching is good, so that students generally learn well. Teachers' assessment of students' work is good. The curriculum is good. The school provides a broad range of opportunities, including a very good programme of activities beyond the school day. Accommodation and resources for learning are good. The school cares very well for its students. It gives them very good support, advice and guidance. Procedures for care, welfare, health and safety are very good. There are very good measures to involve students in the school's work and development. Links with parents are very good. Links with the community are excellent. Links with other schools and colleges are good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is good, so that students generally learn well. Teachers' assessment of students' work is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good in most subjects, and in most subjects inspected in the sixth form.
- Teaching of students with SEN is good – very good in the sixth form.
- Teachers and classroom assistants work well together. Assistants provide a very good service and support individual students very well.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 158 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
7(4%)	36 (23%)	69 (44%)	42 (27%)	4 (2%)	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.

32. Overall, teaching and learning are good in all years and in most subjects. They are good in English, French and Spanish, mathematics, ICT, geography, history, religious education, art and PE. They are satisfactory in science, the drama seen in Years 7-11 and music. In design and technology, teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 7-9 and good in Years 10-11. Teachers' command of their subjects is very good, as is their very effective partnership with the teaching assistants, who work very well with them and make a very good contribution to successful teaching and learning.
33. Some excellent teaching was seen. In Years 7-9, four such lessons were seen, one in English, one in French and two in history. In Years 10-11, two excellent lessons were seen – one in each of English and science. In these lessons, teachers were totally in control of their subjects, conducted the lesson rigorously, but often with good humour, so that precise outcomes were achieved. They had the highest expectations of what their students could do. Students responded very positively, making very rapid, assured and productive gains in their knowledge and skills. Their behaviour was very good, because they were fully engaged in achieving the precise goals they had been set.
34. Much very good teaching was seen, in many subjects. In these lessons, teachers knew their subjects very well and had prepared very challenging, relevant lessons. Students enjoyed their work, and many were clear about their lesson goals and how they intended to reach them. Good teaching was the most often seen quality. In many lessons, teachers set a good pace

and taught with knowledge and good humour. Their lessons were imaginative and engaging, so that students responded well and made good progress.

35. In satisfactory lessons, teachers had a secure knowledge of their subjects and how to teach them. They communicated lesson aims clearly enough to their students, who knew what to do and achieved satisfactory results. In many such lessons, goals could have been clearer, leading to more specific summing up at the end. Though enough had been achieved, the progress and knowledge gained were not great enough to generate a clear summary and challenge the students on what they had learned. There were very few unsatisfactory lessons. These were generally due to the teacher's unsatisfactory planning, so that students were not clearly enough aware what they had to do, and so drifted away from their goals and underachieved. Teaching in Bengali was unsatisfactory, overall.
36. Though both teaching and learning were good overall, teaching was generally stronger than learning. Students' capacity to work independently is satisfactory overall, but could be better. Teachers sometimes have to work very hard to persuade them to learn actively, and there is a tendency for teachers to provide more input than they ideally should, in order to achieve pace and good behaviour. This suits some students well, who admire their teachers' efforts on their behalf without feeling the need to reciprocate. In some lessons, inappropriate behaviour reduces (as it is intended to) students' capacity to work independently. Sometimes, teachers do not expect enough of them; sometimes, students succeed in preventing them doing so. Improving attitudes to learning and hence teachers' ability to challenge students sufficiently is a key to improving the overall progress which students make.
37. Teachers assess students' work well. Marking is often well done. The school has made considerable efforts to improve homework, which is now set and marked satisfactorily. Teachers make regular assessments of students' work, and each faculty or department has a record of the specific targets each student should be achieving by the next review. Targets vary in quality and usefulness, and are satisfactory overall. It is not often easy to discern the overall progress which a class or individual has made, from reviewing them. In some lessons, for example an excellent history lesson in Year 8, teachers get full benefit from the system, inviting students to compare their targets to the National Curriculum criteria for levels, asking them how they will reach this level and then providing precise guidance on how to do so. This is how personal targets can be best used. Students in this class were making excellent progress. The school is aware that further improvement in target setting is a priority.
38. Good teaching of students with SEN enables them to learn and achieve well. Subject teachers are aware of students' needs and usually take them into account in their planning. Teaching assistants support teachers and students very well, especially in geography, art, religious education and design technology, where they show good initiative and are closely involved in the planning of lessons. In the teaching and learning support faculty, teachers and assistants work very effectively together, encouraging small classes of students with special needs to learn for themselves, without becoming dependent on support. Teaching on the ASDAN course in Years 10 and 11 is very good; the marking of these students' files is excellent, providing support but challenging students to assess their own learning. Students are aware of the targets in their individual education plans and teaching assistants monitor their progress against these targets closely.
39. Teachers are aware of the needs of the more able and talented students in their classes. As a result, they often plan suitably challenging work for them, especially in mathematics, physical education, music and religious education. In these subjects, students learn well.
40. Students at an early stage of learning English receive individual teaching support in lessons, as well as individual withdrawal lessons. Support is centred currently on the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, along with humanities. However, although the school provides more funding than it receives for EAL, the number of teachers and teaching

assistants for EAL students is not great, given the carefully identified need. The quality of support is very good, as long as support teachers liaise with the main classroom teacher before the lesson. This generally happens. In other lessons seen, where several students were at a slightly more advanced stage of learning English, the EAL specialist teacher shared whole-class teaching closely with the main classroom teacher. This form of support ensured a high degree of comprehension of the subject matter amongst the EAL students. The Language and Literacy room is often open, and here students receive good extra help and guidance on homework and coursework assignments.

Sixth form

41. Teaching, learning and the assessment of students' work are good. One excellent lesson was seen, in drama, in which the teacher's deep knowledge of dramatic history gave her students absolute confidence and allowed them to make very rapid gains in knowledge. There was an equal number of good and very good lessons, and these were the great majority seen. There were comparatively few satisfactory lessons and no lesson seen was unsatisfactory. Teaching and learning were good in six of the nine focus subjects seen; in mathematics and economics, teaching and learning were satisfactory; they were very good in politics.
42. The teaching of students with complex needs is very good and enables them to learn very well. Teachers and teaching assistants work very well together and in all lessons help students to develop confidence and independent learning. They are very aware of students' individual needs and take this into account when planning lessons, for example in the careful organisation of learning groups in the classroom. Students have clear targets for improvement that stem from accurate assessment of their needs and difficulties; teachers and assistants closely monitor progress towards these and students know what they are trying to achieve. However, teachers do not give students enough opportunity to develop their ICT skills. In some business education lessons at entry level, teaching is not sufficiently linked to the real-life context. For example, students calculate transactions using paper discs instead of real money.
43. There are several students at an early stage in learning English. Though there is no official, funded provision for them, the school makes sure that they receive help. As a result, many learn well and make good progress.
44. Improvement in teaching and learning since the last inspection has been very good. The proportion of very good and excellent teaching has risen from a fifth to over a quarter, while the previous amount of unsatisfactory teaching – again a fifth – has been almost eliminated. The last report also mentioned improvement since the previous inspection. Teaching has now become a positive force for the improvement of standards.

The curriculum

The school provides a good range of opportunities, including a very good programme of activities beyond the school day. Accommodation and resources for learning are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school offers a very inclusive education, giving students from varied backgrounds and with a wide range of needs good opportunities to benefit from the education it provides.
- Students benefit from a wide range of options in Years 10 and 11.
- The school does not provide a daily act of collective worship.

Commentary

45. The school provides a good curriculum overall in Years 7 to 11. The provision for ICT and religious education, noted as unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection, has been improved. However, the school has not tackled the issue of providing a daily act of collective worship.
46. In Years 7 to 9, the National Curriculum is fully implemented, including sufficient time for personal, social and health education and citizenship. Curricular areas are at various stages of development with regard to key national initiatives, but such developments have already brought about some improvements in standards, particularly through the use of well structured three-part lessons. The school has focused attention well on the students' cross-curricular literacy and ICT skills but procedures to enhance and support students' numeracy skills across the curriculum are not fully effective.
47. A wide range of academic subjects is offered in Years 10 and 11, complemented by vocational courses in ICT and business. Students have good opportunities to study a modern foreign language including Bengali, a major community language. The curriculum caters well for students requiring entry level courses and offers Japanese, Spanish, history and geography at this level. Innovative curricular planning has established good provision for academic study support, particularly for students in need of language development.
48. The formal, taught curriculum is enhanced by the very good provision of activities across a range of sporting, arts and other activities. This is a strength of the school. Take-up is generally good and regularly monitored. The aspirations of gifted and talented students have been supported by growing links with the National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth. Other students have participated, for example, in the 'Write Away' club, workshops with a poet and a number of theatre visits. Students in Years 9 and 10 have explored community relationships in the context of Northern Ireland.
49. Provision for learning beyond the school day is very good and all students have the opportunity to benefit from additional academic help, after-school and breakfast clubs, and Saturday schools. A mix of teachers, youth workers, sports instructors and volunteers provides a wide range of out-of-hours learning. For example, the community team leads a programme to promote environmental awareness amongst students, encouraging students to recycle litter, to be more energy-efficient and to identify safer routes to school for students.
50. The school has a very inclusive curriculum. Its provision of equal opportunities for all students is very good. The school takes great care to meet the needs of minority ethnic groups. Students with EAL have access to the whole of the curriculum, in line with the school's equal opportunities and inclusion policies. A small, but significant number of EAL students, with the encouragement of the foreign and community languages faculty, take their home languages at GCSE and Advanced Level. The success rate at top grades is high.
51. The school's provision for students with SEN is very good. There is a high level of effective support in lessons and this is supplemented by teaching in small groups for students with learning difficulties. A few students with more severe literacy difficulties do not have sufficiently frequent support to help them improve their reading and writing skills as well as they might. Students with behavioural, social and emotional difficulties receive good support. Individual counselling and innovative methods such as sports mentoring and "talk time" help them to understand their difficulties and take responsibility for improving their behaviour. Learning mentors provide further support for students with a range of needs. In Years 10 and 11, students have very good opportunities to gain entry-level qualifications in a range of vocational and academic subjects, both in school and at the local college, in addition to GCSE courses.

52. For those students whose behaviour has disqualified them from lessons, there is good support to help them return to lessons as soon as possible. The careers co-ordinator and the *Connexions* careers service provides very good specialist help for students at all stages of development and need. The grouping of the students in classes of mixed ability generally supports the school's inclusive ethos, but some subjects, for example mathematics, would benefit from further review of these arrangements to ensure that work is consistently matched to the needs of the full attainment range.
53. Accommodation is good and is very well managed and cared for by a very helpful and effective team. The school has managed to improve its accommodation considerably, creating attractive new rooms in its constricted site. As a result, there is full access for students with physical disabilities. It has coped very well with the extensive building work still taking place. The school benefits from good accommodation to support its community links and excellent accommodation for SEN. Resources for learning are generally good. The match of teachers and support assistants to the needs of the curriculum is good. Technical, clerical and administrative support is very effective.

Sixth form

54. The sixth form curriculum is good. The school has demonstrated that it now provides sufficient time for religious education, an issue noted at the last inspection.
55. The selection of academic and vocational courses is well matched to the needs and aspirations of most students. There is a good range of entry level qualifications with programmes in business, and leisure and tourism. Central to the school's vocational offer is the extensive and successful programme of business courses, well suited to the needs of the local community. Although there is a good range of A2 and AS courses, the curriculum lacks a viable science offer. Students benefit from a successful Level 2 English course. The school has recently introduced similar provision for mathematics. However, there is too little time allocated within the timetable for this new course, which is supplemented necessarily by out-of-hours sessions.
56. A very good programme of enrichment activities, including PSHE and out-of-hours opportunities, contributes very effectively to students' personal development. Sixth form voluntary activities include a major community-based programme, the Millennium Volunteers. Other opportunities include a food hygiene course at Billingsgate Fish Market and a leadership challenge weekend.
57. A growing number of students choose to remain at the school for post-16 courses. However, numbers for some courses such as mathematics and modern foreign languages are very small. The school is ready to innovate in response to students' needs, as illustrated by current curriculum development planning. Very good guidance for individuals helps students find the courses best suited to their needs, either at the school or in other institutions. There is similar very good preparation for all students for the next stage of higher education or work.
58. The school provides very well for students with complex needs. Students have very good opportunities to gain entry-level qualifications in leisure and recreation, business education and health and social care. The ASDAN course, *Towards Independence*, further helps students to develop their life skills. Students also benefit from a wide range of non-examination courses. There is a high level of effective support from teaching assistants.
59. Improvement at all levels has been good since the last inspection. The school has expanded well its vocational offer in business. Attempts to provide science have not yet been successful.

Care, guidance and support

The school cares very well for its students. It gives them very good support, advice and guidance. There are very good measures to involve students in the school's work and development, through seeking and acting on their views. Sixth formers get very good support and guidance and there are very effective arrangements to hear and act on their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Personal and academic targets are well established, but academic targets need further development.
- Advice and guidance on future courses and career options are good.
- The views of students have rightly become a key influence on the school's work.

Commentary

60. Levels of minor accidents are low among students. In lessons, teachers effectively emphasise the importance of safety considerations, especially before practical work in science and design and technology. Formal policies and practices relating to equipment, the internet and school visits are applied effectively. Child protection procedures are very good, and properly carried out. The school makes very good use of a wide range of expertise to deal very effectively with the complex needs of a minority of its students. Students feel safe at all times in school, although some Year 7 students say they feel anxious in crowded corridors, during the changeover between lessons. Most students have confidence in form tutors as well as other pastoral and support staff to address their concerns.
61. Support for students' achievement, through monitoring, is frequent and very effectively shared with students and parents. Students spoke positively about the contribution made to their progress by the targets set regularly in most subjects and at tutor review days. This system is well established and understood. In many cases, however, targets could be more specific and demanding. Where the level of work causes concern, heads of year and tutors act quickly to alert students to the need for improvement.
62. The school's links with the community contribute significantly to the very good support, guidance and care that it provides for students. For example, through a sponsorship arrangement with a major bank, it provides a well-attended breakfast club, available to all students. The school is developing its full service provision for the community well and is moving towards making family therapy available once a week in a refurbished, on-site community house. Adult and family learning is developing through, for example, free "taster" courses in salsa, creative writing, ICT and other leisure activities. The EAL co-ordinator regularly contacts parents. Two Bengali-speaking support teachers are regularly present at evening student review sessions to provide information and advice.
63. Assessment procedures for students with SEN are carried out efficiently. Students' Individual Education Plans provide useful, practical advice for teachers, and students' progress towards their targets is monitored regularly. Several support agencies provide good additional support for students with a wide range of difficulties. A social and academic inclusion team meets regularly to ensure that all available support is targeted to meet individual children's needs as efficiently as possible.
64. Advice and guidance on future courses and career options are good, especially in the crucial Year 11. The work experience programme, presentations on the full range of post-16 options and more detailed information on a range of college courses and apprenticeships are key features. The *Connexions* staff provide additional support, especially for students with SEN.
65. Surveys of students' views are an influential feature of school life. Important surveys have taken place recently on individuals' learning styles and bullying. Very good use is made of class meetings to clarify and discuss issues identified in surveys, some of which are forwarded to year and school councils. Staff and students value the work of the school council. For example, the council's discussions led to a change in the school uniform and the introduction of a lunchtime pass. Students take part in interviews for new staff and departments seek their views, as part of subject reviews.

Sixth form

66. The school provides good, impartial advice to students before entering the sixth form. During Year 11, students are made clearly aware of the entry requirements for A level and the various vocational courses. Potential students are interviewed by senior staff, to establish the best option for them. The high retention rate on all sixth form courses is a good indicator of the effectiveness of the induction arrangements.
67. Very good termly reviews follow the pattern established in the main school. Students with complex needs receive very good support and guidance from the teaching and learning support faculty and several support agencies, whose work is very well co-ordinated. Visits from outside speakers are highly valued by students in helping them to decide about the next stage of their education or career.
68. The very positive relationships between staff and sixth formers provide a secure basis from which to hear and respond to their views, for example in the sixth form committee, supported by the head of sixth. Students' views form part of subject reviews.
69. Since the last inspection, good progress has been made in improving standards of welfare and guidance, throughout the school. Procedures for health and safety have greatly improved, as has the provision of access for those with disabilities.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The links with parents are very good. Links with the community make an excellent contribution to students' personal development. Links with other schools and colleges are good, making an important contribution to students' opportunities and experiences. The sixth form has excellent links with the community and very good links with schools and colleges.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school operates a genuine open door policy and provides good information on students' progress. However, some parents remain unconvinced by the advantages of learning and this is an important barrier to raising achievement.
- The induction of students into Year 7 is very good.
- There are excellent links with the community.
- The very good links with local universities play an important part in advising students on higher education.

Commentary

70. Tutor review days and effective termly reports on students' progress keep parents very well informed on progress and areas for improvement. The students' journal generally maintains effective links between home and school. The weekly Principal's Newsletter keeps parents exceptionally well informed on all that is happening at school. It also regularly provides key dates for diaries and whom to contact on a range of issues. The school makes very good use of the tutor review days to carry out parental surveys on a wide range of issues. As a result, the school is very well informed and seeks to respond constructively on the issues that concern some parents. For example, a survey indicated that some parents did not always get a timely response to their queries. A system has been introduced to provide an initial response within a day. Formal parental complaints are few and well handled. Overall, parents are positive about what the school provides and achieves. The school works hard to win over a minority of parents which is unconvinced by the advantages of school and education generally. Improving attendance suggest it is making steady but significant progress.

71. Student induction arrangements are very good. Additional support for students who are considered vulnerable and units of work to bridge the transition to senior school are important features. Parents are positive about how their children settle at school.
72. The school's links with the community are excellent. A major school aim is to place the school at the heart of the community and make a key contribution to neighbourhood renewal. This is making excellent progress and some of the benefits are outlined throughout this report. Other highlights are the availability of the school for community use every evening and Saturday mornings. Its sports facilities are very well used, through very good cooperation with the Island Sports Trust, and this in turn provides the opportunity to improve existing facilities. The school's involvement with the school sports co-ordinator programme is also increasing the number of sports opportunities for students at the school and those in local primary schools. As part of the local Education Action Zone (EAZ), the school is helping families to become more involved in the school, through a developing Family and Lifelong Learning programme. The community is well represented on the governing body, through representatives of the bank that sponsors the breakfast club and representatives of the Worshipful Company of Shipwrights, which provides extra funding for the school. The school is keen to identify and fill gaps in its provision, and recently consulted with parents and the community to help in this process.
73. Aided significantly by membership of the EAZ, the school's links with its six main feeder primary schools are very well developed; the schools are adopting a common approach to assessment for learning and conflict resolution among students. The school is a key contributor to the local authority's Leadership Improvement Grant (LIG) work in secondary schools. As a result, assistant headteachers work for periods in each other's school and a significant amount of good practice is shared between heads of department. The school is the secondary partner in another's specialist school bid. As part of its training school status, the school does a significant amount of work with other designated training schools. The Principal is a key contributor to the National College of School Leadership's Training Heads network. There are important links with two further education colleges, as part of providing vocational pathways for students from Year 10 onwards.

Sixth form

74. The excellent links with the community provide major benefit to the sixth form. Major retailers and Canary Wharf PLC provide students with experience and insights into different aspects of business, including skills of managing people. Charitable fundraising is an important part of sixth form activities. Speakers from a range of voluntary organisations talk to students on issues such as healthy living and personal safety. With the help of the Education Business Partnership links, the Financial Services Authority run short courses and talks on subjects, for example on becoming an entrepreneur.
75. Links with other schools and colleges are good overall. There are very good links with a wide range of universities. These include a Cambridge college, the London School of Economics (LSE) and several other London universities. For example, speakers from the London Metropolitan University help students to raise their aspirations by considering university courses. Links with the local college of further education do not yet cover the full range of students' vocational needs.
76. Since the last report, further very good progress has been made on improving the links with parents and the community, at all levels of the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership from the Governors and Principal is excellent. Leadership and management from senior staff are very good. These have led to an improving, popular and respected school with a very wide range of community activities.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Governors provide excellent leadership, but have not ensured that a daily act of worship takes place for all students.
- The Principal gives strong, very positive leadership. Her commitment to providing equal opportunities for every student has made the school an excellent model of social inclusion.
- Leadership and management by senior staff are very good. The leadership team works very well together.
- Strategic planning is excellent, for example in the development of the school's expanding sixth form and its status both as a training school and a full service school.

Commentary

77. The governance of the school is excellent, with the exception of one respect in which the school is not complying with statutory requirements. Governors give very able and committed leadership. They have fostered the vision of a fully inclusive school. The school's excellent standards of community provision and of equal opportunity for all derive from a first-rate partnership between Governors and Principal. Governors are very well informed of the quality of all aspects of school life, through their clear structure of committees and detailed reporting from the leadership team. This allows them to give extremely clear challenge to the school, for example in their desire for yet clearer evaluation of students' standards of achievement. Governors are determined that results should improve further, and have the full support of the school's senior staff in aiming for this goal. Indications of how this can be achieved can be found in the attainment and teaching sections of this report, and in the commentary on management, below. Despite the excellent quality of their leadership, governors have not ensured that the school provides a daily act of collective worship for all students. Governors have been aware of this issue, which was mentioned in the last inspection report, for many years, but do not consider a daily act of worship appropriate in the context of this school.
78. The Principal gives excellent leadership. Her clear vision of how the school should include everyone – students, staff, parents, Governors, community – in a successful learning community has brought great loyalty and affection from staff and students, who support her determined, successful championship of the school. The Principal has led the school through difficult times. She and her very capable senior team have raised standards of behaviour, hugely improved the attitudes of students and the community towards each other, and have provided a very extensive network of support for students, within and outside the school. Leadership by the senior team and the heads of subjects and years is very good. Teamwork at this level is very good, and all senior staff share the Principal's vision of an inclusive, happy but disciplined community. Their strategic planning, seen for example in the very comprehensive development plan and the development of the school as a training school, is excellent.
79. Management is very good. Policies are well presented and regularly reviewed. Systems for maintaining and improving behaviour are clear and effective. For example, the system of exclusion from lessons and the Principal's role in supervising troublesome students are highly effective. Whenever necessary, the day's boisterous offenders are gathered in crestfallen reflection in the Principal's study. In such ways, active and involved leadership translates into very good management of the daily life of the school. Systems for the monitoring of performance, including data on students' achievement and the regular, comprehensive review of the work of faculties and departments, are very good. Overall, these systems produce good results. Sometimes, results are very effective. For example, the big improvement now

reported in the quality of teaching comes directly from very good monitoring of teachers' performance and the school's excellent provision for training and professional development. Sometimes, however, monitoring could be more effective. Students need to be held to account more rigorously for the achievement of their academic targets, which in many cases

need to be more demanding. The school is aware of this issue and is taking steps further to improve it. Increasing the expectations made of students is a significant aspect of raising their achievement and of further improving the quality of their learning.

80. The management of staff recruitment, retention, deployment and workload is excellent. The high, and damaging, turnover of staff has been much reduced, largely because the school has invested so fully in staff training and development, which has led to an appreciation by staff of the benefits of working in this challenging but exciting training school. The school has invested wisely in an extensive and very effective network of support staff, all working with students. Assistants are allocated to faculties, so enabling them to be part of the team and to acquire an expertise in the subject. A team of ten assistant staff supervise the school at all times. These are the nationally celebrated 'redcoats', who make a huge contribution to good behaviour. As local people, they know the students well and can help and reprove them as no outsider can. They are an excellent example of how shared responsibility improves the workload and the workplace for everyone. Management of premises and of health and safety is very good.
81. The SEN co-ordinator provides excellent leadership. He has a clear vision for the development of support for his students. He motivates and supports staff extremely well and has built a large and very effective team. Management is very good. The large team of teaching assistants has been devolved to departments, faculties and heads of year; their work is very well monitored. Evaluation of provision for students with special needs is based on clear criteria, and very good use of data to identify appropriate areas for development. However, these criteria are not yet outlined in the special needs policy. The school is working towards a clearer identification of the many resources provided for these students to ensure that it is as cost-effective as possible.
82. Provision for gifted and talented students is well managed by two joint co-ordinators. Funding from the EIC initiative is used efficiently and close analysis of results leads to the identification of appropriate areas for further development.
83. Leadership and management of the language and literacy department are very good. The well-qualified co-ordinator keeps detailed records of students' progress from their entry to the school and updates them annually. Tests clearly distinguish between levels of fluency in speaking and writing. This is very good practice. The department currently receives no added clerical help to compile these records. Year 9 tests and teacher assessments and GCSE results are analysed centrally by ethnicity and by EAL stages. They are circulated to each school department, in order to raise awareness of possible underachievement, as well as to celebrate success. The co-ordinator provides regular in-service training of high quality for teachers, newly qualified teachers and others in school and beyond.
84. The school's community provision is very well led and managed. The assistant headteacher with responsibility for this has a clear vision for its further development and has identified appropriate areas for future action.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	Balances (£)
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Total income	6,697,655
Total expenditure	6,578,093
Expenditure per student	5,427

Balance from previous year	337,877
Balance carried forward to the next	457,439

Note: large balances brought and carried forward represent capital and special grant funds, to be spent in the following year. Income stated above includes £1057853 from special grants. Without these, expenditure per student is £4554 in 2003-04.

85. Financial leadership from Governors is excellent. With the Principal, they have recently created a new post, that of business manager and principal bursar. The newly appointed bursar is rapidly creating the systems which will lead to greatly improved understanding and expertise in business and financial management. This is already good under the new bursar, but the size and sophistication of the school's present budgets and ambitious programmes requires all staff responsible for financial management to improve their knowledge of systems and how to manage them. The bursar has just published a paper to the leadership team on best value. At present, principles of best value are used satisfactorily, for example in the comparison of courses run by the school with those in other schools and colleges, but there is much scope to make all staff aware of how best value can be used as a further measure of self-evaluation.
86. When all sources of income are combined, the school receives a well above average income. Results remain below average, though achievement is satisfactory in Years 7-11. The school works very successfully to give every student good opportunities, and achieves good behaviour. It spends its considerable extra funds very well, so that its partnership with the community is excellent. Overall, it provides a good quality of education and on balance gives good value for money.

Sixth form

87. Leadership by Governors and Principal is excellent. Governors have been determined that the sixth form shall become a strong feature of the school. Increased numbers, a growing curriculum and improving results confirm the progress made. Management by the head of sixth and her team is very good. Students' progress is closely monitored and good direction and advice are given by tutors. The sixth form is now a lively and successful part of the school, attracting an increasing number of applicants from other schools and colleges. It receives more than it spends, and so makes a good contribution to the main school. It gives good value for money.
88. Since the last inspection, improvement in the leadership and management of the whole school has been good. The role and effectiveness of Governors have greatly improved, and the leadership of the Principal continues very strongly. Leadership and management of the many programmes new since the last inspection have been well informed and successful, for example in the launching of the training school and new community programmes. Key issues from the last report have been well tackled. Value for money was satisfactory and is now good.

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

Work-related learning (WRL)

Provision in work-related learning is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in WRL match those usually found nationally.
- Teaching and learning opportunities are recognised and used.

- There are some good strategies in place to support WRL, although not all subject areas have identified their contribution well enough.
- Provision of learning for work is uneven across the curriculum.

Commentary

89. Overall, standards in WRL match those usually found, nationally. Boys and girls of differing competence from all religious, social and ethnic backgrounds show sound achievement. There are GNVQ courses, and many students have a good breadth of knowledge and understanding and can apply these to work-related situations. For example, successful application of numeracy skills and ICT in the workplace is recognised in the feedback from many work experience supervisors.
90. Teaching of learning about work is satisfactory. Enthusiastic teaching in Year 10 helps students to work independently on their chosen research topics. Students are given the responsibility to carry out learning tasks with initiative and independence. In English, teachers ensure all students complete a major piece of coursework based on their work experience. In design technology, teachers challenge students to consider the importance of health and safety measures in the workplace as well as production techniques such as batch manufacturing.
91. In their learning through work, whilst on work experience, most students were fully engaged and evaluations of working are usually fully completed. Students evaluate this experience for their progress portfolios. Most find the experience worthwhile to the planning of their future careers, and report that they feel more confident once they understood what was expected of them in work situations. However, some lack sufficient problem-solving and analytical skills and the ability to work with independence.
92. The school manages WRL effectively, through a new appointment of an associate assistant headteacher who line manages a careers co-ordinator with a close partnership with *Connexions*. Overall this is sound. However, as most of the specific teaching takes place on days when the normal timetable is suspended, there are not regular opportunities for learning. An audit of provision is still to be undertaken.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most teaching is of good quality.
- Marking and assessment promote good learning.
- Students enjoy English, which leads to high enrolment in the sixth form.
- Support for the least able students is very good; for the most able there is room for improvement.

Commentary

93. Standards on entry are below average. Test results at the end of Year 9 in 2004 showed marked improvement on the year before, indicating standards just below average. Girls perform better than boys by the same margin as they do nationally. Results are similar to those in science but below those in mathematics. Results are better than the average for similar schools.
94. Results in GCSE are below average. Literature results are significantly better than those for language. Students are obtaining better results in English than in most other exams for which they are entered. Girls perform better than boys, but the gap is closing.
95. These results were confirmed by the inspection. Students use vivid language in stories and poems. They present their work imaginatively, making good use of word-processing. Redrafted work is copious, taking note of the teacher's corrections. By the end of Year 9 spelling is largely accurate. Students are familiar with parts of speech, and stylistic devices such as alliteration and metaphor. Paragraphing is weak, as is sentence structure, use of idiom, and variety of expression.
96. Students in Year 11 know the texts well. They write persuasively about different genres, the morality of fictional characters, and how writers achieve their effects. Creative writing is imaginative, handling dialogue accurately. Information technology is well used for both word-processing and PowerPoint presentations.
97. In some lessons, students prove how articulate they can be. Students address their classes about work experience, but seldom discuss in groups. Reading is encouraged in a fortnightly library lesson for Years 7 to 9, and a weekly reading club. Standards in reading are at the nationally expected level.
98. Achievement is satisfactory. Although overall results are below the nationally expected level, most individual students improve on their previous attainment. Those with SEN make very good progress, but the most able are restricted by lack of challenge. Those with EAL make good progress, but by Year 11 are still making linguistic errors.

99. Teaching varies but overall is good, some lessons being very good or excellent. Teachers plan thoroughly, use imaginative methods, and manage their classes with skill. As a result student behaviour and attitudes are both good. In the best lessons activities are varied and challenging. In a few weaker lessons the tasks were too easy, and too little was done to ensure that new ideas were fully digested.
100. Learning is generally good. Thanks to clear exposition by teachers, the students know what to do, and are well guided in how to set about it. Teachers' marking is very thorough, so students can see what they need to do to improve. They enjoy English, and many are keen to continue their study of literature in the sixth form.
101. Leadership and management are both good. Effective delegation, collaboration in planning, and team teaching all help to raise standards. The department analyses examination data thoroughly but would benefit from objective testing in earlier years. There is excellent liaison with the highly effective teaching assistants.
102. There has been good improvement since the last inspection, chiefly by making teaching more imaginative, the sharing of good practice, and the quality of assessment.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

103. Standards of writing are below the nationally expected levels in most subjects. Standards of reading are average, but some students, particularly those with EAL, cannot understand everything in their text books. Standards of speaking can be above the expected level.
104. The language and literacy co-ordinator has organised regular staff training, and produced an effective booklet to guide all staff. There are many initiatives to help students improve their language skills. The co-ordinator visits selected classes to suggest ways in which language could be enhanced. Experienced teachers work alongside others in partnership; "literacy fortnights" focus on a designated topic across the school; reading is made a key concern for a week at a time; a reading club occurs every Friday; and older students spend twenty minutes each week helping younger students to read more proficiently. The library is a well run, well stocked and welcoming place, an undoubted aid to learning. A public speaking group has been successful in recent competitions.
105. Despite these efforts the response from departments varies. Most are aware of the policy, but some say they lack specific guidance in how to carry it out. Good practice was seen in history and science, where key words were displayed and explained. In history, students get help through worksheets, tasks being adapted to their ability, but this is not universal. High standards of speaking were observed in design technology, information technology and science; while presentations seen in a geography lesson in Year 9 were well above the expected level. On the other hand, standards of speaking in physical education were below this level, and in history many students lacked confidence in discussion.

Modern foreign languages

French, Spanish and Bengali were inspected in full and are reported below. The school helps students enter GCSE in other home languages. In 2003, three students gained top grades in Chinese and Russian. In 2004, eight students achieved similar grades in their home languages of Persian, Russian, Chinese, Gujarati and Turkish.

French and Spanish

Provision in French and Spanish is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results in French in 2003 and 2004 were among the best in the school.
- Teachers manage students' behaviour very well.
- Students achieve well and have good attitudes.
- Less confident students do not have enough practice in developing speaking skills.

Commentary

106. In 2003, GCSE results in French were below average overall. Girls' results were broadly average and their achievement was good. Boys' results were poor and their achievement was unsatisfactory. In 2004, results improved for both boys and girls and the overall exam target of 40 per cent was only just missed. These results were among the best in the school for both boys and girls. In 2004, a small group of mainly lower-attaining students taking Spanish achieved low results in national terms. They achieved satisfactorily, given considerable staff disruption, and the limited amount of time students had studied the language since Year 9.
107. Standards in French in the current Year 9 are around the nationally expected level and students achieve well overall, including SEN and EAL students. Strengths include generally very good attitudes towards the language and good behaviour. Students are prepared to listen carefully and most take part readily in oral work. A significant number, however, are much less confident, especially some of the lower attainers in the large mixed-ability classes. A few talented Year 9 students produce imaginative written work of a high standard and are on course to take GCSE in Year 10. Students in Year 9 who choose Spanish as a second foreign language make a good beginning in all skills.
108. Standards in French in the current Year 11 are broadly in line with expected levels. In Spanish, standards are lower because of the later start in Year 9. Students achieve well in both languages, except for a small group in Spanish, who do not concentrate enough in lessons. Girls and more highly attaining boys respond better than boys generally to the closely structured examination course and write more at length, with greater accuracy. Middle and lower-attaining boys perform satisfactorily, with close guidance, using more limited vocabulary and a narrower range of tenses and expression. They often lack confidence in speaking skills.
109. The quality of teaching is good overall and students learn well. Teachers have a very good command of the language and are very familiar with the demanding task of teaching mixed-ability classes beyond Year 8. Teachers provide a very good range of tasks and materials, and give equal value to the needs of students of all abilities. Nonetheless, on occasion, the pace of lessons flags, because of the wide range of students' language attainment in any one class. Many of the higher attainers could make faster progress, although teachers regularly provide them with appropriately challenging extension activities. Teachers provide many opportunities for the gifted and talented by teaching Japanese and Spanish in Year 10, taking students on trips abroad, allowing early entry to GCSE and A-level examinations and encouraging EAL students to take GCSE examinations in their home languages.
110. Leadership and management of the department are very good. The new head of department leads a team of teachers strongly committed to raising standards and interesting students in languages. A more rigorous system of assessment and monitoring is being developed. Plans are in place to focus on students' speaking skills.
111. Improvement since the last inspection is very good. Examination results have risen and achievement, teaching and learning are now good.

Bengali

Provision in Bengali is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results are improving and an appropriate curriculum is offered.
- Though the school's senior leadership is committed to the subject, its leadership and management are currently unsatisfactory.
- A scheme of work is not fully developed.
- Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall.
- Monitoring of the subject is not rigorous enough.

Commentary

112. There has been considerable improvement since the last inspection. The latest GCSE results in Bengali are amongst the best in the school, though standards are still below average. Standards in Years 10-11 are average, but those in Years 7-9 are below average. Students' overall achievement is satisfactory in view of their level of attainment on entry to the school. There is no significant gender difference in students' attainment, but those with learning difficulties have no special educational support in Bengali lessons.
113. Students in both key stages are more confident in listening than in speaking. Their response is, however, limited to the use of single Bengali words and phrases. They respond well to such opportunities as listening to a tape, but the provision of answers often inhibits independent learning whilst resulting in little meaningful gain. Students are generally unable to sustain a simple conversation unaided. They are a good deal better at listening than at speaking the language.
114. In reading, the majority of younger students shows a developing awareness of the Bengali alphabet and familiar vocabulary relating to family relations and eating habits, but have difficulty with reading sentences. Older students recognise names of different forms of transport and different types of occupation. Their reading of a familiar text shows a fair degree of accuracy, but not fluency or understanding. A minority of more able students in both key stages has started using contextual clues for meaning. Students generally have difficulty with standard Bengali pronunciation.
115. Writing is generally concerned with copying, but work produced in both key stages is generally well presented. Spelling of familiar vocabulary is often accurate, but students with the exception of a minority of higher attainers need support with writing a simple description or narrative. The use of ICT to promote Bengali is at an early stage of development.
116. Some aspects of teaching are satisfactory. Activities offered are consistent with the requirement of the National Curriculum and provide access to authentic Bengali text. The topics used enhance students' awareness of Bengali culture and society and make a good contribution to their spiritual and moral development. Resources are appropriate. All of this reflects the teacher's secure subject knowledge, but teaching methods and use of resources do not ensure that learning is effective overall, so that teaching and learning remain unsatisfactory and are an area for development. More rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning is needed, with opportunities for further professional development. The new head of the modern languages faculty, who oversees the subject, is aware of this and has prepared a support plan.
117. Leadership and management of the subject are currently unsatisfactory because the level of monitoring and support provided has not ensured overall satisfactory teaching. The school

strongly encourages the teaching of Bengali. Despite continuing shortcomings, improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Results have improved, the teacher is preparing to help an A-level candidate and the school has provided a good structure for further development.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- National test results in mathematics at the end of Year 9 are below average but improving. Standards at the end of Year 11 are improving but also remain below national figures.
- Many students make steady progress over their time in the school but students in the middle attainment range make slower than expected progress.
- Teaching is good overall; teachers are committed to helping their students to do well and relationships are very good.
- The leadership and management of the department are very good and this has raised teachers' expectations of what students can achieve.

Commentary

118. Standards in mathematics overall are below nationally expected levels. Students' attainment in mathematics when they enter the school is below average. Results in the national tests for Year 9 have been well below the national average over several years. In 2004, results improved significantly, although remaining below average. These results matched the average for schools with a similar starting point. Standards in GCSE mathematics examinations in 2004 also improved, but remained below the national average. Boys and girls achieved similarly in these examinations, reversing the previous trend of boys' lower attainment. However, although most groups of students achieve satisfactorily, average-attaining students do not necessarily gain grades as high as expected, partly because of casual attitudes to learning, often reflected in the poor presentation of their work.
119. Inspection evidence indicates that overall standards in Year 9 are close to the national average. Achievement in lessons is mostly satisfactory. The work of those with SEN reflects good progress. However, there are a substantial number of students in the middle attainment range, and some gifted students, who do not achieve as well as they should. This pattern crosses all ethnic groups.
120. By the end of Year 11, students achieve satisfactorily overall with the majority making at least the expected progress from Year 9. Those students who are gifted mathematically generally make good progress over the GCSE period. Coursework tasks are conscientiously completed, but contain few imaginative or independent ideas.
121. The quality of teaching in mathematics is good overall. Working relationships are very good and all teachers are committed to helping students achieve of their best. Students learn soundly in lessons because of the high expectations of teachers. The gap between learning in lessons and achievement over time arises because of a number of barriers to learning: generally, students lack independent study skills; there is little tradition of achievement in education in the local area. The best lessons are carefully structured and provide a range of learning opportunities. Shared planning and the increasing use of ICT to demonstrate and model concepts are growing strengths within the department. In the less successful lessons, teachers do not plan sufficiently precise learning outcomes and activities are not always well enough matched to the students' earlier learning. This is particularly so where there is a very

wide attainment range in the group. The mathematics department has very good systems to track the students' achievements over time. There are examples of thorough diagnostic marking in the homework books and good opportunities for students to respond to teachers' guidance.

122. The quality of leadership in mathematics is very good and is a strength. The head of department has a clear vision for its development and has encouraged a committed team approach. The department is very well managed and day-to-day running is smooth, despite the dispersed accommodation. Monitoring and evaluation of work are regular. Since the last inspection, progress has been good. Standards have risen significantly and good teaching has been sustained.

Mathematics across the curriculum

123. Provision within mathematics to develop students' numeracy skills alongside other aspects of the subject is good. At whole-school level, there is a comprehensive numeracy policy and training for all staff is planned. Guidance on methods of calculation and pictorial representation is being updated. Some departments such as science and music have integrated elements of numeracy into schemes of work.
124. Students have some opportunities to use these skills across other curriculum areas. For example, students' mathematical competence supports work adequately in geography where older students use graphs and simple statistical methods to support their coursework. In younger year groups, however, students' numerical and statistical work sometimes lacks sufficient accuracy. Students' mathematical skills are not always adequate to support their work in ICT. For example, students in Year 9 found difficulty in modelling profit and loss to build a formula. In design and technology, students use star graphs adequately to analyse design ideas but there are often missed opportunities in younger groups to enhance the students' numerical skills.
125. Overall provision for mathematics across the curriculum is not yet fully planned and co-ordinated and too few subjects actively enhance or use the students' mathematical skills. As a result, provision is unsatisfactory.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good in Years 7-9 and satisfactory in Years 10-11. There is some very good and outstanding practice.
- Leadership and management are very good and teaching and learning have improved overall.
- Standards are steadily improving at both key stages.
- Assessment strategies, analysis and the presentation of data are well established.
- There are insufficient extra-curricular activities.

Commentary

126. The results of national tests at the end of Year 9 have steadily improved, but are still below the national average. Results in 2004, at both level 5 and at the higher grades, were the best ever, with no significant difference in the achievement of girls and boys. Students make satisfactory progress, including those with SEN and other groups. Although improved in 2004, results are well below those of students with similar prior attainment in similar schools.

127. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are improving very slowly. In 2004, the proportion of students gaining A*-C was below the national average, but better than the previous year. Progress is satisfactory and attainment is in line with that of schools with students of similar ability. The proportion of students gaining A*-G is in line with the national average.
128. Standards in lessons seen at the end of Year 9 are generally in line with nationally expected levels, although those seen at the end of Year 11 are less so. On the whole, achievement and progress are satisfactory, despite a high turnover of teaching staff.
129. The quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 7-9 and satisfactory in Years 10-11. Some very good and outstanding practice has been developed from the national initiatives in teaching and learning. Teachers have very good specialist knowledge and the thorough planning of lessons, together with focused questioning, helps students to learn well. Teachers also use new information technology effectively and this has a positive impact on students' learning. However, activities to enhance students' interest in science are not plentiful enough. Though there are some visits, there is no regular pattern of clubs or of visiting speakers in science. The graduate training programme is very successful in providing teachers of good quality within the school.
130. Leadership and management are very good and the head of faculty is an outstanding role model for both students and teachers. This is a strength of the faculty, seen for example in the department's rigorous assessment procedures. Data on the achievement, progress and potential of students are very carefully analysed, and this is making an increasingly strong contribution to aspirations and standards in science. The head of faculty demonstrates exceptional clarity of vision, commitment and high aspirations, and has successfully identified and tackled major areas for improvement. She handles people with sensitivity and the team of teachers, technicians and support assistants is encouraged and very well supported.
131. Since the last inspection there have been major changes in staffing, and some of these have adversely affected the attitude and attainment of students. However, overall improvement is good and science is now a strongly improving subject. The curriculum is now good in all years, and students' attitudes to science are now good also. Support staff are very effective and new courses are well resourced. However, the use of ICT by students is not yet well developed.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Provision in ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is satisfactory and improving in Years 7 to 9.
- Teaching and learning are good. Students rise to challenges and apply themselves well.
- Standards are below nationally expected levels, but are improving in Years 7 to 9.
- Leadership, management and teamwork in the department are good.

Commentary

132. Standards in ICT on entry to the school are below nationally expected levels in control and modelling, but average in using ICT to communicate ideas. In recent years, teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 and examination results have been below the national and the school's own averages. In the current Year 9, students are able to solve problems using ICT-based models. Using the Intranet, they can search critically for sources of information. However, ICT capability remains below national average levels, and the department is finding it difficult to keep students on track to meet the 2005 target for teacher assessments at levels

5 and 6. By the end of Year 11 in 2004, results in GNVQ (General National Vocational Qualification) and short course GCSE were below national averages.

133. During the inspection, students were making sound progress and achieving satisfactorily. When building relational data bases, few students understood how tables were built and linked when solving data handling problems. Students of different backgrounds and those with special education needs show appropriate achievement, but those with above average capability show some underachievement in Years 9, 10 and 11. For example, a student developing an ICT-based magazine was unable choose from different software solutions and match this to the client's needs.
134. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan exciting and motivating lessons, leading to full engagement by students. In Year 9, students planned a theatre booking system using advanced spreadsheet functions. Teachers show skilful classroom management techniques. Episodes in lessons are usually challenging. For example, in a Year 7 lesson, students had to make a PowerPoint presentation to their peers on the subject of child labour. Management of support staff is good, and students from differing backgrounds are fully supported, and so learn well. Less successful is the learning of gifted and talented students who are unable to gain access to extension tasks in a few lessons. Students often need more specific help in how to improve their work.
135. Leadership and management are good, seen for example in the successful introduction of the CISCO programme and the development of the school's digital brain. Departmental evaluations are rigorous and the department has above average capacity to improve. Clear and vigorous leadership and good management of detail have led to good improvement in the provision of ICT since the last inspection, when the department was judged unsatisfactory.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

136. The school makes effective use of ICT across the curriculum. Standards across subjects are improving, but are below the nationally expected level.
137. The last inspection report noted that there was insufficient use of ICT in other subjects. As a result of focused planning and determined action by senior managers, the situation has improved. There has been substantial investment in: wireless networking; the provision of desktop and a mobile trolley of laptop computers; interactive whiteboards; software and staff training, and virtual learning environments.
138. ICT resources across the school are now satisfactory and improving, as is general staff confidence and skills in using the technology. Teachers routinely use ICT to improve students' independent learning and self-esteem. Practice is best in English, mathematics, geography, and design and technology. Further development is needed in science, history, and art and design. The leadership and management of cross-curricular ICT are very good. A strong partnership between specialist ICT teachers and the school's leadership team is bringing rapid improvement and developing new prospects for the use of ICT across all curriculum subjects.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good leadership and management are effective in improving standards.
- Students achieve well in Years 10 and 11 as a result of good attitudes and good teaching.
- Very good use of ICT and fieldwork provides very effective learning.
- Inconsistency in the quality of teaching and marking in Years 7 to 9 needs attention.

Commentary

139. Results in GCSE examinations in 2004 were below average but showed an improvement on the previous year. Most students met or exceeded expected levels of attainment and students did better in geography than they did in most of their other subjects.
140. By Year 9, standards have improved since entry in Year 7 but are still below average. Achievement over Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory, but there is too much variation in the quality and type of work seen in students' books. Students have a satisfactory grounding in geographical skills. Most use and interpret maps and graphs adequately. Knowledge of place and spatial patterns and processes are weak. Higher attainers including gifted and talented students are suitably challenged. Many low attainers are hindered by language difficulties but SEN students, when provided with specialist support, make good progress as do most EAL students. However, students at an early stage in learning English do not have tasks modified enough to meet their specific needs. There is no significant difference between the progress of boys and girls or between students of ethnic groupings.
141. By the end of Year 11, standards are close to the average. They are higher in Year 10. Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is good. This is due to consistently good teaching with high expectations and generally well-motivated students. The best independent study GCSE projects are of high quality. However, continuity and progression are hindered by the frequent absence of a minority of students, who underachieve as a result.
142. Teaching and learning are good overall, with mostly very good teaching in Years 10 and 11. Management of lessons is generally very good and experienced teachers deal very competently with challenging students. Teaching strengths include very good planning, well-structured lessons and the engagement of students in active learning, using modern technology. Relationships are warm, with a relaxed and purposeful air in most lessons that is conducive to good learning. The best teaching is lively, enthusiastic and interesting. However, as a few students are reluctant learners in Years 7 to 9, there are lessons where pace and productivity are lost and learning is not as good as teaching. Learning in Years 7 to 9 is limited by insufficient use of local maps and atlases. Learning would be improved if all lessons were fully placed in the context of previous study.
143. The subject is well led and well managed. Staff work well together as a team. Curriculum planning is good, but should focus more precisely on the knowledge, understanding and skills to be learnt. Assessment overall is good, but there is too much variation in marking in Years 7 to 9. There is a very good coherent and broad programme of ICT implemented. Fieldwork undertaken provides very effective learning, but only occurs locally. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management of the department are very good.
- Students achieve well.
- The quality of teaching is good with some very good and excellent features. This leads to good learning by students.
- Standards are improving in Years 7-9.
- A substantial minority of students is not sufficiently skilled or confident in learning independently.

Commentary

144. Year 9 teacher assessments were below national averages in 2004 but standards have been improving steadily over the past three years. GCSE results in 2003 were well below national averages but improved quite considerably in 2004. In both these years there was a significantly larger proportion of boys than girls in the cohort entered for the examination. In both years, girls did much better than boys and this gap between the attainment of boys and girls was considerably wider than nationally. However, students did relatively better in history than in most of their other subjects and achievement, in terms of prior attainment, was good.
145. Although the standard of work seen in Years 7-9 is below nationally expected levels, achievement is good. Teacher assessments over the past 3 years show that standards are improving. By Year 9 students have acquired key historical skills. All, including those students with SEN, can extract information from a variety of written and pictorial sources to answer simple historical questions. They can use appropriate historical vocabulary. Students know that history is based on evidence. Most students have a basic knowledge and understanding of the major historical events and personalities of the periods they have studied and can place these in a chronological framework.
146. Attainment in the current Year 11 remains below expected levels, although the standards seen in students' coursework on the Blitz is in line with these levels. Achievement is good. Students have a secure knowledge and some understanding of the impact of World War I on America and of the Civil Rights movement in the U.S.A. Higher attaining students, including those for whom English is not their first language, have a good understanding of historical concepts such as causation and change.
147. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons are very well planned and have a clear structure. Relationships in the classroom are excellent and students respond well with very good attitudes to learning. Lower-attaining students and those with SEN and EAL are well supported, whilst gifted and talented students are appropriately extended in most lessons. Sometimes, though, individual needs are not met because the work set is not appropriate. Learning is tightly structured for all students; although this promotes good achievement, it leads to a substantial minority of students becoming very dependent on their teachers.
148. Leadership and management of the department are very good. There is a clear, planned focus on raising achievement. Assessment is good. However, there are insufficient opportunities provided for the use of ICT in the teaching of history. Standards have been maintained, achievement has become a priority and there has been good improvement since the last inspection.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership and management of the department are very good.
- Teaching is good overall and students learn well.
- The provision of well-qualified specialist staff is a very good feature of the department.
- Accommodation is very good.
- Improvement since the last inspection has been very good.

Commentary

149. At the end of Year 11 in 2003, standards of attainment in the GCSE Short Course were broadly in line with the national average. In 2004, standards were somewhat below this level. To reach national average standards in GCSE indicated good achievement for these students. Overall, standards seen during the inspection were below levels expected nationally; however some are in line with expected levels. Students are familiar with many aspects of Christianity and Islam and can talk about them in a meaningful way. Their knowledge and understanding of the central and basic beliefs of these religions are less secure. As well as learning about religions, students also learn how this knowledge might have relevance to their own lives and experiences. Written skills are not strong. Students make intelligent use of information technology. Overall, the achievement of students is satisfactory.
150. At the end of Year 9, standards of attainment are below nationally expected levels. Students are familiar with many aspects of world religions such as symbols and some aspects of Sikhism. Students' understanding of world religions as coherent systems is not yet fully developed. Written skills are not strong. Students can make good use of information technology in their work. Overall the achievement of students is satisfactory. However, students often achieve well and make good progress in lessons, in most years seen, responding well to the good teaching they receive.
151. Across the year groups, there is no significant difference between the standards of attainment of boys and girls. Students with SEN and those who have EAL make good progress. Different levels of work provided by the teachers enable more able and less able students to make good progress.
152. Overall, teaching and learning are good. Some teaching is very good and some is satisfactory. The department has done well to maintain these standards in the absence of the head of department this term. Teaching assistants provide a very good service. All lessons are well prepared and have good content drawn from world religions. Teachers have strong subject knowledge, which helps students to learn well. Where the teaching is very good, very effective management of the classes allows students to concentrate hard, listen well and learn a great deal in the time available. Sometimes, when teaching is satisfactory rather than good, students can be restless and do not always maintain their concentration, so that learning is less effective. Overall, teaching makes a good contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as well as to their literacy skills. Homework is set and assessment is effective.
153. Leadership and management are very good. The department is very well staffed with specialist teachers. Resources are good. Accommodation is very good; it is well maintained and attractive, and adds to the positive and welcoming atmosphere of the department. Statutory requirements are met in all years.
154. Progress since the last inspection has been very good on all the issues raised at that time. In the previous report, teaching, learning and progress were all unsatisfactory; statutory requirements were not met; and little evidence of enthusiasm for the subject was seen. All this has hugely changed for the better.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships in the workshops are good and standards are improving.
- Some students are not fully challenged because, too often, all work at the same pace.

Commentary

155. Standards in the work seen in Years 7-9 are below average. Students' achievement is satisfactory at this stage. They make satisfactory progress across the range of work, learning new skills and consolidating their understanding of previous work. They create a good range of design ideas and make models with some precision. Even the most confident do not, however, suggest alternative methods, nor show on plans how they solved problems.
156. Standards in the GCSE examinations in 2003 were very low. In 2004 they were well below average. In the work seen during the inspection, standards are higher, although they remain below nationally expected levels overall. Standards in textiles are close to average. Students' achievement is good in textiles and satisfactory overall. In Years 10 and 11, students are good at designing, and use computers well to improve their course work. However, their work on paper lacks detail and they do not know enough about the use of computers in commercial production. Students enjoy their practical work. They do better in textiles because they use the correct terminology, plot graphs to show new information and give reasons why some materials are better for a specific product than others. In all lessons seen, students were encouraged to think, but used the best range of skills with confidence in textiles.
157. Teaching and learning in Years 7, 8 and 9 are satisfactory, with some good features. Students confidently celebrated their success and looked forward to more learning because the teachers and their assistants skilfully built confidence through a variety of interesting activities, demonstrations and discussions. In some otherwise good lessons, students were sometimes expected to work for too long without assessment by the teacher. This is partly because new methods to encourage students to assess their own work and to know what to do next to improve, are not fully bedded in.
158. Teaching and learning in Years 10 and 11 are good. Teachers managed the practical sessions very well through the good use of interesting resources, real-life examples, humour and enthusiasm, so that students followed their example, worked hard and in most cases worked cheerfully. They are not sufficiently involved in assessing their own work because teachers' marking and challenge are not sufficiently consistent to build students' confidence.
159. Standards achieved at the last inspection have been re-established, through difficult times. Improvement has been satisfactory. Leadership and management are good because new systems are having a good effect. The team is enthusiastic and capable.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students make very good progress from Year 7 to Year 9.
- The standard of work at GCSE level has improved in 2004.
- Teachers are well informed and possess good subject knowledge.
- Assessing, tracking and recording systems are lacking in rigour.
- Students have limited access to ICT equipment.

Commentary

160. Attainment on entry to Year 7 is well below nationally expected levels. Students' understanding of composition and use of line, tone and colour are under-developed. However, they enjoy the subject and make good progress. By Year 9, the standard of students' work has risen and is in line with expected levels. Achievement from the start of Year 7 to Year 9 is very good.
161. In the 2003 GCSE Examination, attainment was well below the national average. Staff turnover played a significant role in a decline in standards in 2003. Results improved in 2004, but remained well below the national average. Students in Years 10 and 11 are currently producing work of a standard that is in line with nationally expected levels, and their achievement in these years is good. Most students respond positively to tasks that have been set by their teachers. Students with SEN are well assimilated into teaching groups and are given good support.
162. Teaching is good overall. Teachers are well informed and their good subject knowledge enables them to plan thoroughly and make good use of exemplar material to introduce new subject matter. Organisation during lessons is usually good, but sometimes teachers' management of students is just satisfactory. Homework is set regularly, but marking needs to be carried out with much greater consistency across the department. Where teachers have high expectations, learning and behaviour are good.
163. Most students learn well. They work with reasonable concentration and apply themselves readily to the set tasks. Year 9 students make good progress and are beginning to explore ideas through the use of a range of media and materials. Students in Year 11 learn well, deepening their knowledge and understanding and improving their technical skills. Most can carry out independent research.
164. Leadership and management are good. The head of department has only been in post for slightly over one year. She has a very clear vision of how the department should develop and is keen to introduce design work incorporating ICT and photography. After a period of significant disruption to staffing over the past four years, the staff team is now more stable. However, assessing, tracking and recording systems currently lack rigour and more formal procedures would ensure greater accuracy of feedback for individual students.
165. Accommodation is good and resources are adequate within the context of a traditional model of the curriculum that places emphasis on drawing, painting and craftwork. At present, students have very limited access to the computers, digital cameras, scanners and printers that should enable them to produce images within a design context. Improvement since the previous inspection is good. Student behaviour is now good and sometimes very good during lessons.

Drama

Provision in drama is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Much teaching and learning are excellent.
- Teachers provide an excellent range of extra-curricular activities.
- Professional development is very good, but is not yet fully effective.

Commentary

166. Standards in drama are well above nationally expected levels. Four fifths of boys and girls consistently achieve grades A* to C in GCSE. These results are the best in the school.

167. In lessons, students can work very well in groups. They understand the performance techniques which they use. They know how to deploy exaggerated gestures and mime to create the desired effect. They are well equipped to assess each other's performances, and learn from that. Younger students have difficulty staying in role, but gain in confidence in older classes.
168. Achievement observed in Years 8 and 9 was good, students making steady progress. In Year 11 the results indicate excellent achievement.
169. Teaching and learning are good overall. The lessons observed in Years 8, 9 and 10 were at least satisfactory. Teachers develop very good relationships with their students, demonstrate techniques skilfully, and assess accurately. At its best, the quality of teaching, seen for example in Year 11, was excellent.
170. Leadership and management are excellent. There is an energy and inspiration which raises the standard of teaching in newly qualified teachers, and enthuses the students. Large numbers choose to take drama as an option for GCSE, and the first groups are now established in the sixth form. The department is very well organised with meticulously thorough handbook, schemes of work, and assessment procedures. Very good opportunities for the professional development of staff are provided, and this has the potential to raise standards of teaching further, across the department.
171. Above all, the department provides an unusually rich programme of extra-curricular activities. These include regular school productions, performed by both the main school and the sixth form; performances taken to primary and secondary schools; visits to the National and the Palace theatres; work experience at the Half Moon theatre; and the use of drama to aid the social development of disaffected students. There are drama clubs after school and in nearly every lunch hour.
172. There has been good improvement since the last inspection, chiefly in the quality of teaching, the standards attained in examinations, and the attitude of students.

Music

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Years 9 and 11 are below average.
- There is very good provision for extra-curricular activities and instrumental lessons.
- Good relationships in the department have a positive impact on students' learning.

Commentary

173. GCSE results for A*-C grades were below average in 2003 and well below average in 2004.
174. For current students, standards in Year 9 are below the nationally expected level. Standards in the last inspection were found to be at the expected level. Students enter school with below average musical abilities and their achievement is satisfactory. By Year 9, many students show satisfactory rhythmic skills. They play a short repeated part in an ensemble and improvise a melody over a simple chord structure. A few students' performances however, lack fluency. Students occasionally make insufficient reference to musical terms when answering questions. Students with SEN and those with EAL make satisfactory progress. More musically able students make good progress.

175. Standards in Year 11 are below average. Standards in the last inspection were found to be average. Some students satisfactorily identify key features in a musical extract and understand basic musical terms. They perform in class and most show skill at evaluating each other's performances. However, some of the performance pieces are less demanding than the standard required for the examination. Bearing in mind the relatively weak musical skills with which many began the course in Year 10, their achievement over the course is satisfactory. A few students' studies are interrupted by occasional absences.
176. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, and some good teaching was seen. Teachers' good relationships with their classes promote good behaviour and a positive response. Effective use is made of teachers' own musical skills to help students learn. For example, in a Year 8 lesson, good use of demonstration enabled students to understand how different musical techniques had been used in a composition. Satisfactory provision is made for developing literacy and numeracy skills and for students to use music technology.
177. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There have been staff changes since the last inspection and the head of department is new to the post. She has already identified ways of improving the provision in order to raise students' achievement. Assessment procedures are being further developed to ensure that they more accurately reflect standards by the end of Year 9. Good opportunities are provided for students to perform in concerts, both in and out of school. These include a Christmas concert and the Young Musician of the Year competition. Instrumental teachers and the faculty technician make a valuable contribution to developing students' musical skills.
178. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. Although standards have declined in Years 9 and 11, there has been an improvement in the provision for extra-curricular activities and for developing students' knowledge of music from different cultures.

Physical Education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good, and students between the ages of eleven and fourteen achieve well.
- The negative attitudes of a minority, and barriers to learning created by the curriculum structure and poor literacy skills, restrict the achievement of older students.
- Leadership and management in this forward-looking department are very good.

Commentary

179. Teachers' assessments of Year 9 students in 2004 showed that standards were below average. GCSE examination results in 2004 were below the national average for A* - C grades, although they continued an improving trend. Many students attained better results than in their other subjects. Standards in Year 9 are below average in practical skills, knowledge and understanding. Standards are also below average in Year 11. Students on the GCSE course display higher practical skills than levels of theoretical knowledge.
180. Achievement is good in Years 7-9 and satisfactory in Years 10-11. Students join the school with below average standards, and achieve well by the age of fourteen, mostly as the result of good teaching. The majority of students achieve satisfactorily by the age of sixteen. Although they are taught well, the low time allocation for the subject, combined with poor language and literacy skills and the negative attitudes of some students, restricts the achievement of many older students. Many students on the GCSE course achieve well, particularly in practical work. Students with SEN and those with EAL mostly achieve at the

same rate as other students. Overall, boys achieve better than girls. Gifted and talented students achieve well. For example, some Year 9 students begin the GCSE course a year early.

181. Teaching is good and many students learn and achieve well. Teachers have high expectations, structure lessons well to allow for appropriately challenging practices, and provide good feedback to enable students to improve. This is very evident in games lessons for students of all ages. Assessment is good, and helps students learn. Teachers try to promote active learning in theory lessons, but many students have limited capacity for learning independently of the teacher.
182. Leadership and management are very good. The head of department inherited an under-performing department, but now leads a committed team. There has been a good review and evaluation of progress, combined with good monitoring. There is a clear vision of how the department can develop further. The level and quality of staffing are very good, and there is a popular programme of extra-curricular sport, with some success in inter-school sport. The curriculum is restricted for older students by a relatively low timetable allocation and a structure which limits the range of activities, which centre largely on games. This is a factor in the negative attitudes of some students.
183. There has been very good improvement since the previous inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION (PSHE) AND CITIZENSHIP

PSHE is taught on particular days when the curriculum is otherwise suspended. This clearly defined provision is well led. It is taught through registration periods, assemblies, lessons and three special days each year. Some planned teaching of PSHE was seen in the assemblies and tutorial sessions visited. Good assemblies were seen on domestic violence and the importance of developing healthy relationships in Year 7 and on conflict resolution in Year 8. Effective contributions on anti-bullying were seen during registration periods.

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Outcomes of the school's overall provision for education in citizenship are very good. It produces well informed and well adjusted young citizens.
- An audit has been carried out to show where the various aspects of school life are already contributing to citizenship.
- A good scheme of work is in place.
- Citizenship is suitably assessed and reported through other subjects, but clearer identification of students' attainment and progress in the specific strands of citizenship is needed.

Commentary

184. Many aspects of citizenship are strongly present in the school and a significant amount of work has been done in this area of learning. Areas where subject departments are making a significant contribution to citizenship have been identified, particularly in the more factually based aspects of citizenship. In religious education, history and geography, for example, students cover topics of learning on diversity of identity in the UK, as well as some aspects of parliamentary government. In English, students learn about the significance of the media in society. Visitors to the school such as MPs and local councillors create an awareness of many political and social issues.

185. The PSHE programme also makes a strong contribution to citizenship, particularly in helping students to understand human rights and responsibilities, and the law and how it effects young people. Students also learn how to resolve conflict fairly through a training programme, available both to students and staff.
186. The school's excellent community links give students very good opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding about becoming informed citizens. For example, students have first-hand knowledge of the work of the community policeman, who is based in the school. A very large number of adults working in the community came to discuss the school's role in preparing young people as citizens, and spoke with warmth and affection for what the school is doing.
187. The school also covers the learning of skills, which are the other two elements of citizenship. Opportunities occur during registration times and on special days for students to develop their capabilities in enquiry and communication, and participation and responsible action. Students are encouraged to discuss and give their opinions about topical issues found in newspapers and other media. Review days and class meetings enable students to reflect on their participation in school life. However, the best use is not always made of the strongly pervasive education in citizenship which the school provides. Often, students are unaware that they are learning about citizenship and many have yet to see it as a separate subject in its own right. The assessment, recording and reporting of citizenship is made through other subjects, for example RE, when it would be better and clearer to report specifically on citizenship to parents as a separate subject. The school is aware of this issue and is taking steps to develop its practice.
188. No explicit teaching of citizenship could be seen during the inspection, though examples of written work confirmed that standards were in line with expected levels for these students. From many conversations with them, it is clear that outcomes in terms of their awareness of aspects of citizenship were strongly developed.
189. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory overall. Strong points include the careful audit of citizenship across the curriculum and the good scheme of work. Further development is needed in assessment. The head of department, new in this post this term, has made a good start in this development.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

In the inspection, nine subjects and courses were inspected and are reported on in detail. Work in other subjects and courses was sampled and contributed to the overall picture of teaching and learning in the school.

The table below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 2003, the latest year for which national comparisons are available.

Level 3 GCE AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Biology	3	0.0	65.2	0.0	11.1	0.0	20.6

Chemistry	2	0.0	72.7	0.0	13.9	0.0	24.1
Communication studies	3	66.7	86.4	0.0	23.8	20.0	32.0
Mathematics	1	0.0	61.9	0.0	17.1	0.0	22.1

Level 3 GCE A level and VCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art	2	50.0	98.6	0.0	50.2	20.0	50.2
Biology	2	0.0	96.4	0.0	39.2	0.0	78.6
Business studies	6	83.3	98.7	33.3	36.8	66.7	80.1
Chemistry	1	0.0	97.6	0.0	49.0	0.0	84.9
Communication studies	7	100.0	99.4	0.0	37.8	71.4	82.1
English literature	7	100.0	99.5	42.9	46.5	88.6	86.5
History	7	85.7	99	28.6	44.6	71.4	86.4
Information technology	5	100.0	95.6	0.0	24.6	60.0	69.5
Business VCE	15	93.3	65.0	0.0	14.6	44.0	60.1
Performing arts VCE	4	0.0	87.3	0.0	42.2	0.0	77.8

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

English was inspected at AS and A2 levels, and is reported below. **French** was sampled; standards of attainment were just above average, and teaching and learning were very good.

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching inspires students to study English and achieve very good results.
- The subject is popular and now attracts some of the biggest classes in Year 12.
- Marking is exceptionally thorough.
- Students have too little opportunity to learn from each other.

Commentary

190. Standards at both AS and A2 are above the national average. In 2003 and 2004 all candidates gained passes in both examinations, with half obtaining grades A and B.

191. These results are borne out by observation of lessons and scrutiny of essays. Students show a very good knowledge of the texts, and are able to answer with confidence factual questions about character and plot. They are diligent note-takers, and can turn these notes into well argued essays. Some students for whom English is an additional language still make errors in idiom and syntax. On the whole, students construct essays logically, with apt quotation, but sometimes fail to bring them to a reasoned conclusion.
192. Achievement is very good. In the A2 examination, three quarters of the sixteen candidates achieved at least one grade better than their prior attainment would have predicted, and some achieved two or three grades better. Students work very hard, making good use of the advice given by their teachers on how to improve.
193. Teaching is good, and some is very good. Students receive a great deal of helpful guidance. Many essays are annotated with several pages of helpful comments, indicating where each assessed aspect of the syllabus is being covered, and how effectively. Teachers have wide knowledge, which they use in ways the students can easily digest, thus building trust and making lessons fun. They expound clearly, and probe understanding with searching questions. However, they seldom allow much time for discussion and the sharing of ideas.
194. Learning is good. Work seen in essays is of high standard, and shows steady improvement, so standards seen now are likely to rise by next summer. Students prove that they have absorbed points from an earlier lesson, and can relate these to new points as they arise. Students are encouraged to research by using the library and the internet. However many do not read much for pleasure. That said, they enthuse about their experiences of English in the sixth form and find their expectations amply fulfilled.
195. Leadership and management are good. The teaching is shared between three teachers to maximise the beneficial effects of different teaching styles. Shared planning of tasks and moderation of students' work contribute well to maintaining high standards.
196. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Chiefly this has resulted from attracting a larger intake and increasing the proportion of grades A to C from half to three quarters.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

197. Standards are in line with nationally expected levels. Generally, sixth formers write copiously and accurately. However, some of those with EAL occasionally make mistakes in spelling, syntax and idiom.
198. The paired reading by which sixth form students help younger ones to improve their reading also improves their own use of the language. It is in speaking that sixth formers show skills often above expected levels, and very good practice was seen in business studies, psychology and media. There is good discussion in history, but some girls lack confidence and do not get enough encouragement from teachers to participate. Students in English say they enjoy discussion, but little of this was observed.

MATHEMATICS

The inspection covered the A2 and AS examination courses offered by the school: pure mathematics, mechanics, and statistics modules. During the inspection it was not possible to sample lessons for students re-sitting GCSE mathematics. Provision for key skills is made within vocational areas.

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Numbers studying A2 mathematics are very small. Standards achieved match the students' starting points, some of which were low.
- Results in AS mathematics courses improved in 2004 with four of the six students gaining higher grades.
- Teaching is satisfactory and good working relationships support students' learning.
- Students generally enjoy their mathematics but few extend their mathematical experience by wider reading.

Commentary

199. The 2004 A2 mathematics results are below the national average, with no student gaining the higher A and B grades. However, the grades were in line with students' starting points, some of which were low. The AS results in 2004 improved and students achieved satisfactorily, with over half gaining a B grade. Few of these six students continued with the further study of mathematics. Results in pure mathematics were stronger than those in statistics.

200. Standards of work seen in lessons indicate satisfactory progress in pure mathematics in Year 12. Students have not yet tackled work in other modules. One student is studying A2 mathematics. This provision is only partially covered within the timetable. Teachers give generously of their time outside lessons to work with this student, who is achieving well, given his starting point. In discussion, the student reported a high level of support from teachers and a high level of satisfaction with the attention to his needs. Some students report their difficulties in the transition from GCSE mathematics to AS work, without the aid of a bridging

course. Year 12 students noted the challenges in building on Year 11 work which was only partially understood, particularly higher-order manipulative algebra skills. Students honestly admit to limited independent study skills at the start of courses.

201. A re-sit GCSE mathematics course for post-16 students has been introduced from this year. Because of unavoidable staff absence, it was not possible to sample teaching or talk to the students. Insufficient time, one period per week, is allocated to this course within the timetable.

202. The teaching sampled was satisfactory. All teachers have a good command of mathematics and understand clearly the requirements of the examination specifications. However, teaching pays too much attention to the content to be covered rather than to the students' learning needs, so that students spend much time in lessons as passive listeners or on routine exercises. Nevertheless, students report significant individual help and support from their teachers, and working relationships are very good.

203. Leadership is very good and management is good. These are demanding roles, given the need for staff to devote much additional time outside the timetable. The previous inspection gave little prominence to post-16 mathematics. Standards, however, are improving although the number of students studying mathematics remains very small. Progress since the last inspection is satisfactory but there is further to go in enriching the post-16 mathematics curriculum by offering a wider range of examination modules more suited to some students' need.

Mathematics across the curriculum

204. Provision for students to develop key skills is made through individual subject courses and there is no separate provision. This is an area for improvement.
205. As a result, not all students benefit from the further development of numerical and mathematical skills. Some students do not have sufficient skills to support work in AS and A2 courses. Poor basic algebra skills hinder learning in economics for example. In business studies, students perform least well on the papers requiring basic number operations. The development of numeracy across the curriculum is a key issue for the school, for all years.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Courses in ICT at AS and A2 levels were inspected and are reported below.

Provision in ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is satisfactory and students enjoy this subject.
- Teaching and learning are good because of challenging and motivating lessons.
- No vocational courses are offered in the sixth form.

Commentary

206. Standards in A2 level ICT are below nationally expected levels. However, taking into account the standard of attainment of students on entry to the course from Year 11, achievement is satisfactory. Standards have been consistent over the last two years. The retention of numbers of students continuing from Year 12 to 13 is satisfactory. The course is popular and attracts some students from other schools. When working on activities that require extended detail and descriptions or well reasoned justifications, the written and oral responses of students are below average. Similarly, their work on problems that need numerical analysis

using ICT tools lacks rigour and precision. Knowledge and understanding of ICT are average. Students are able to research problems on networks and work well in teams. Students achieve equally well, irrespective of their backgrounds.

207. Teaching is good. It is well planned in both years, and students learn well. Teachers all have good subject knowledge and are able to plan lessons that are motivating and match the needs of students. Teachers encourage students to present their work actively in lessons and take part in discussions. They encourage all students, regardless of their educational needs, to have high aspirations in the range and scope of their ICT projects. Work is marked well and feedback is thorough, and teachers are beginning to use on-line forums and e-mail to help students solve problems collaboratively outside lessons.
208. Leadership and management are good. The department has above-average capacity to build on existing success and extend the range of additional vocational courses. Other advanced courses such as CISCO are run in the school for adults, and the department's involvement with this and other initiatives gives rise to clarity of vision and innovative leadership. At the moment, no vocational courses are provided, so that the range of the curriculum is not as great as it might be. Sixth form ICT was not reported in the last inspection report.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

209. ICT is not taught to all as a key skill in the sixth form, but students in many lessons use ICT. Facilities for independent work in their study area have improved. Some students

are now able to communicate with each other and their teachers using e-mail. A small forum is working on the virtual learning environment, where students are beginning to collaborate and discuss their work with a teacher. Students use word processors, spreadsheets and presentation software readily, applying the ICT capability they have gained in the vocational or short GCSE courses studied in Years 10 and 11. Subjects such as business education make extensive use of ICT in their teaching.

HUMANITIES

Courses in history and politics were inspected at AS and A2 levels, and are reported below. One lesson in the A2 course in **psychology** was sampled in Year 13. Teaching was very good and students learnt well. One lesson of AS **geography** was sampled. Teaching and learning were very good.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well.
- Students have positive attitudes, contributing to good learning.
- Teaching is good, with a strong focus on independent learning.
- Leadership and management are very good. The department is benefiting from increased numbers of students.

Commentary

210. In the A2 examination in 2004, the small number of students entered attained a good pass rate, building on the good results achieved in 2003. Current standards in Year 13 are in line with those of similarly aged students nationally, in the key areas of knowledge and understanding and the development of the key skills of analysis and evaluation of evidence. Students study challenging topics and make good progress in developing their ability to analyse a range of evidence and different interpretations of themes, such as the short and long term causes of the English Civil War and the nature of the French Revolution. They also develop more confidence in expressing their ideas because of the department's emphasis on independent learning. From joining the course in Year 12, students achieve well, and an increasing number of students are opting for the subject.
211. Teaching is good, and promotes good learning, building on students' positive attitudes. Teachers convey their very good subject knowledge through explanation and well structured lessons. The most effective aspect of their teaching is the emphasis on getting students to think for themselves and to develop a strong sense of historical perspective and understanding. This was seen to good effect in a Year 13 lesson in which students took on the roles of key characters in the struggle to assume power in the 1920s USSR, and engaged in debate which added to their understanding of major issues. Teachers also make good use of assessment to develop students' awareness of how they can improve their work, as seen in a Year 12 lesson on the nature of the French Revolution. Students benefit from assessing each other's work, whilst teachers' own marking is detailed and constructive.
212. Leadership and management are very good. The department has successfully adapted to relatively recent changes in syllabuses, and has succeeded in giving the subject a higher profile with an increased take-up. There is good monitoring and review of progress. The

curriculum is enriched by a programme of visits, for example a highly significant visit to Auschwitz.

213. History is a relatively new subject in the sixth form, and was therefore not seen in the previous inspection. History is now a developing and clearly successful subject.

Politics

Provision in politics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are improving and students achieve well.
- Students respond well to imaginative, resourceful and fast-paced teaching.
- Perceptive self-evaluation lies behind recent improvements.
- Investigations do not offer enough challenge to the most talented students.

Commentary

214. On entry to the course, students' attainment is well below average. Girls start with a stronger foundation than boys. In 2003, results in AS and A2 examinations were well below average. AS results improved in 2004 and the current work of Years 12 and 13 students is still better, though still below the nationally expected levels. This reflects a steadily improving trend, despite some staffing difficulties. Their skills are best developed in analysing data and are less strong in developing a persuasive argument through extended essays.

215. Student retention is good and students from all ethnic backgrounds reach good levels of achievement, with girls achieving particularly well because they are more willing to participate in discussions and to persevere. The most talented students are not always fully stretched.

216. Students speak highly of the teaching and in recent years politics has grown to become the sixth form's third most popular subject. Teaching and learning are very good. Imaginative use is made of an extensive bank of teaching resources to fashion interesting, fast-paced lessons. These are carefully planned to include a variety of inputs and tasks, with students encouraged to analyse problems, to think for themselves and to contribute their own ideas. Students' attitudes are good, particularly among girls. Pairwork, groupwork, whole-class discussion and debate help them to consolidate their understanding of complex issues. Extended essays utilising independent research and timed questions prepare students well for examination conditions. Expectations are generally high but the tasks set do not always challenge the most talented students and investigative assignments rarely afford enough scope for these students to conjecture and speculate.

217. Assessment is used well to boost learning. Assignments are marked promptly and accurately, with annotations and helpful comments on how to improve. Recently, students have begun assessing each other's work, using clear criteria. Students are ambitious in the targets they set themselves and receive good guidance. Their own notes are often sketchy and folders are not always well organised to provide a good source for revision. This hinders achievement among less talented students.

218. Leadership and management are good. The teacher-in-charge has a clear sense of purpose and provides a good role model, though the future vision is not clearly articulated in documents. Self-evaluation is perceptive and there is a sound development plan, but schemes of work are under-developed. The broad range of extra-curricular opportunities includes an after-school club with visiting speakers, extra revision lessons and trips to seats of

government at home and abroad. This subject was not reported in the last inspection, but the rising trend in standards is evidence of good improvement in recent years.

ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING

Design technology was inspected at AS and A2 levels and is reported below.

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Specialist teachers of textiles are quickly building or re-building the confidence of individual students.
- Students do not evaluate their own work with enough independence and identify key points for improvement.

Commentary

219. AS examination results in 2004 in the product design course were disappointingly low because of teacher recruitment difficulties. The five remaining students, now in Year 13, are re-taking the examination. With a specialist teacher in post, they have greater confidence and expect better results. The Year 12 course, which started in September 2004, is preparing students for a different examination. Standards on entry to both courses are below average, and attainment in the work seen is below average also.
220. Overall achievement in both courses is satisfactory. With good support and guidance, individuals with widely varying needs make good progress in all lessons. Students' attitudes to learning in lessons are very good. All students receive individual support and guidance about what to do next to improve. They also know how well they are doing. However, they lack confidence in their own ability to maintain good progress between lessons.
221. Standards are below average in Year 13. Designing is good because the students combine computer-aided methods with exciting work involving pencil and brush. However, their analysis of design ideas is not sufficiently detailed. Teaching and learning are good. Students were encouraged to think aloud and to learn from each other as well as from the teacher. However, there is not enough focus on examination requirements.
222. Standards are just below average in Year 12. Students' good designing is inspired by increasingly thorough analyses of the work of classical and commercial designers and artists. Creativity is good. However, students do not present their work with sufficient detail to show on paper why one idea or technique is preferred to another. Teaching and learning are good. They have very good features. In all lessons, individual targets were agreed between the teacher and each student so that learning became increasingly more effective and enjoyable. Wider reading was encouraged and valued by students.
223. Leadership is good, reflected in rising standards and numbers of students. Two specialists are in post; assessment is accurate and there are clear priorities for better provision and better approaches to learning and teaching. Management is good because resources are being well deployed to meet individual students' preferences and needs. There was no provision for post-sixteen design and technology at the time of the last inspection.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

AS and A level courses were inspected in media studies and are reported below. Courses were sampled in art and the performing arts.

In **art**, one Year 12 AS lesson was seen, in which teaching and learning were good, and students achieved well. Two lessons were observed in the Year 12 **performing arts** BTEC Nationals course. In both lessons, teaching, learning and achievement were very good. One lesson in A2 **drama** was seen. Teaching and learning were excellent and achievement very good.

Media studies

Provision in media studies is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Consistently good teaching leads to standards that are close to the average and improving.
- Students integrate theory and practice well and this results in good achievement.
- Shortfalls in accommodation and resources hinder the quality of learning.

Commentary

224. Students follow courses at AS and A2 levels. The AS level results in 2004 were just above the national average. The A2 course results showed improvement on those of previous years, but remained below the average. Most students achieved well, reaching or exceeding their expected levels of attainment. A very high proportion of students continues and completes both courses.
225. Standards of work seen in Year 12 are slightly above average and in Year 13 are broadly average. Achievement over Year 12 and 13 is good. By the end of Year 13, higher attainers demonstrate a good understanding of the relationship between media theory and practice. Average attainers recognise the importance of planning and research and have a clear understanding of genre in their work. Lower attainers find difficulty in linking production with theory and the organisation of their work is weaker. The best A2 level independent studies are of exceptionally high quality. The Year 12 course provides a good foundation for students, but there is no study skills induction programme. The level of absence during the inspection was high and, if continued, could impair overall standards of performance in external examinations.
226. Teaching and learning are good overall. Lessons are well planned and presentation is structured and focused so that students understand what they are doing. Lessons aim to develop students' self-knowledge through discussion, group work and independent learning. Relationships are very good. They are relaxed but professional and lead to a positive commitment from most students. However, a minority of students does not attend regularly, does not complete homework assignments on time and does not prepare well enough for lessons. More precise lesson aims and more visual reinforcement of main teaching points on the board, would improve whole-class learning. More links with local media and work experience would enrich students' understanding of media production and institutions.
227. Leadership is good and courses are effectively managed. However, there is no co-ordinator for the subject in the sixth form. Curriculum planning is thorough and units studied well chosen. These set the scene for the consistently good quality of teaching. Staff work well together. Accommodation is unsatisfactory, as there is no media studies base, resulting in teaching being dispersed. Resources are generally good but the provision of computer facilities in a media studies base would improve learning opportunities. The subject was not reported on in the last inspection but recent developments have been good.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

One Year 12 **leisure and tourism** entry level course lesson was observed. Teaching and learning were very good. Students' achievement, with the help of specialist support of very high quality, was very good also. One **physical education** lesson for students with SEN was sampled, in which teaching, learning and achievement were good.

BUSINESS

The school provides an unusually wide range of business-related qualifications. Economics and Business are reported below. Economics was inspected at AS and A2 levels. Business courses inspected included Business AS and A2, double award AVCE Business, GNVQ Business at both Intermediate and Foundation levels and the Certificate in Skills for Working Life, an entry level qualification.

Economics

Provision in economics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students' skills are weak, but teachers make sure that everyone makes progress.
- Marking is not as effective as it should be.
- Leadership is good and a sound start has been made to this new course, but plans lack detail and focus.

Commentary

228. When they join the course, students' attainment is well below average. This year saw the first set of A2 Level results. The AS results in 2003 were well below average and similar to this year's AS and A2 Level results. Students' work is a little better now. Students' skills are generally weak, but better in interpreting economic facts than in applying theory. Their weak skills in algebraic manipulation act as a barrier to success with economic calculations. The achievement of male and female students and those from all ethnic backgrounds is satisfactory, but the teachers make sure that everyone makes progress, so that those who join the course with the weakest attainment achieve well. Those who continue beyond Year 12 make more rapid progress in Year 13.
229. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Knowledgeable and attentive teaching provides help of good quality, with support for individual students experiencing difficulties. Lessons have structure and clear objectives. Students' attitudes are good and they contribute well to class discussions. Accommodation is good and computers are used effectively to enhance the quality of teaching. There are not enough opportunities for students to collaborate and lessons rely too much on teacher-focused verbal exchanges and individual note-taking. In Year 13, students practise essay writing and past paper questions under timed conditions, which prepares them well for examinations but those in Year 12 are not given challenging homework tasks regularly enough.
230. The use of assessment is unsatisfactory. Only a small proportion of students' work is marked and though it includes some helpful guidance, the marks awarded are over-generous. Students are expected to maintain extensive notes, but these are not well supported by printed summary sheets or worked examples of routine calculations. The use of peer assessment is at an embryonic stage but will provide students with more insight into the strengths and weaknesses of their own work when developed further.

231. Leadership is good but management is unsatisfactory. The head of faculty has high aspirations and is keen to improve provision. Self-evaluation of this course is not strong and the faculty development plan includes no specific reference to economics. The department has data of good quality on students' performance, but these are not yet analysed in sufficient detail to help planning for improvement. All in all, a sound start has been made with this new course.

Business

Provision in business is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- 2004 exam results in GNVQ and A2 level were well above average.
- Standards on all business courses have improved considerably over the past three years.
- Teaching and learning are good and students achieve very well.
- Numbers on the Year 13 AVCE course are very small and standards are low.

Commentary

232. The school offers a number of business education courses designed to cater for the needs of all students. These include an entry level certificate course in business skills, GNVQ foundation and intermediate courses, the Advanced Certificate of Vocational Education (AVCE) double award and AS and A level.

233. Results in GNVQ Foundation and Intermediate and at A level have improved substantially from a very low base in 2002 to well above national averages in 2004. Almost three quarters of students on the foundation course and over half on the intermediate course attained at least a merit in their examination in 2004, while a few gained distinctions. In 2002, there were no merit grades on the foundation course and only six per cent of students gained a merit on the intermediate course.

234. Achievement on these courses has been very good. At A2 level, results in 2003 were above average in terms of AB grades but below average overall, although numbers entered were small. In 2004, with double the number of students entered, 60 per cent attained an AB grade and all passed. Achievement was very good. All 10 students on the entry level course gained a certificate and achieved well. AVCE results also show an improving trend, but numbers have been dropping and results are well below average. However, overall achievement is good, with students entering the course via intermediate qualification.

235. Year 12 students on the GNVQ courses have made a good beginning and at this early stage are progressing well. These students' portfolios showed knowledge and understanding of the business environment and they are competent users of ICT. Intermediate students can, for example, use a spreadsheet to produce a financial document showing cash flow. AS students have also made a very good beginning to their course. They have a very good understanding of marketing and they can apply their theoretical knowledge to actual organisations, as was seen in a lesson on Sony and plasma TV. Achievement is very good. Year 12 AVCE students are achieving well, though standards are below average. They have carried out a number of case studies and have established links with a local cycle firm.

236. Standards in the current Year 13 AVCE classes are well below average for these four students, who are very dependent upon their teachers for their learning; achievement in this group is unsatisfactory at present. A2-level students have a good knowledge and understanding of topical issues, and higher attaining students can apply and evaluate their understanding of

theory to problems and issues in the real world, for example to prominent retailers. Numeracy skills are not well developed. Overall, achievement is good in this group.

237. Teaching and learning are good. Subject expertise is used to motivate and communicate information. Opportunities are taken to reinforce and link knowledge learned earlier. Lessons are well planned, with a good structure which ensures positive outcomes. Activities are challenging and well chosen, with opportunities provided for collaborative work. Relationships are very good and students feel very well supported. Assessment is very good and is used to respond to individual needs. However, in some lessons, students are content to listen passively and are dependent upon their teachers for their learning.
238. Leadership and management are good. The team of highly committed teachers works well together to deliver these tightly structured courses. Links have been developed with local employers, so that students can experience actual business environments. The numbers of students electing to study business has increased in the past few years and this successful department has attracted students from other schools. However, the numbers staying on the Year 13 to complete the AVCE course has decreased and this has been a less successful course than the others being offered. This subject was not inspected in the last inspection.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Sixth form grade</i>	<i>School grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the sixth form and the school	3	3
How inclusive the school is		1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3	3
Cost effectiveness of the sixth form / value for money provided by the school	3	3
Overall standards achieved		4
Students' achievement	3	4
Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)		4
Attendance	4	5
Attitudes	3	4
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2	3
Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		3
The quality of education provided by the school		3
The quality of teaching	3	3
How well students learn	3	3
The quality of assessment	3	3
How well the curriculum meets students needs	3	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities		2
Accommodation and resources	3	3
Students' care, welfare, health and safety		2
Support, advice and guidance for students	2	2
How well the school seeks and acts on students' views	2	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents		2
The quality of the school's links with the community	1	1
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3	3
The leadership and management of the school		2
The governance of the school	3	3

The leadership of the headteacher		1
The leadership of other key staff	2	2
The effectiveness of management	2	2

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