

INSPECTION REPORT

QUEEN'S PARK COMMUNITY SCHOOL

London

LEA area: Brent

Unique reference number: 101560

Headteacher: Mr M Hulme

Lead inspector: Mr D Roberts

Dates of inspection: 4th – 7th October 2004

Inspection number: 268883

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: Foundation
Age range of pupils: 11 - 19
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 1,180

School address: Aylestone Avenue
London
Postcode: NW6 7BQ

Telephone number: (020) 8438 1700
Fax number: (020) 8459 1895

Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mr M Beard

Date of previous inspection: November 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Queens Park Community School is of broadly average size with a stable pupil population, being oversubscribed in each year group. There are significantly more boys than girls in each year group. The school celebrates its comprehensively multi-ethnic population. The proportion of pupils whose first language is believed not to be English is very high, although for very few pupils English is not a familiar language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs (SEN), including those with statements, is broadly in line with the national average. The proportion entitled to free school meals is above the national average. The levels pupils reached in primary schools before attending this school were below the national average in most year groups, but were closer to the national average in the younger year groups. The school achieved Business and Enterprise Specialist Status in 2003. It has attracted a wide range of funded initiatives to help underachieving pupils.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
7582	D Roberts	Lead inspector	
11041	M Moore	Lay inspector	
12857	R Bailey	Team inspector	English
13155	J Dixon	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
17453	C Edney	Team inspector	Mathematics
10160	R Bagguley	Team inspector	Science Physics (sixth form)
18032	I Randall	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
27368	M Merchant	Team inspector	Geography Sociology Biology (sixth form)
23588	C Ajitsingh	Team inspector	History
21825	E Kelly	Team inspector	Design and technology Work-related learning
30695	G Dinan	Team inspector	Art and design
8360	F Peacock	Team inspector	Music
32724	G Jepson	Team inspector	Physical education
1517	D Griffith	Team inspector	Religious education Citizenship
28002	S Taylor	Team inspector	
10060	D Gutmann	Team inspector	Business education

The inspection contractor was:

Tribal PPI
Barley House
Oakfield Grove
Clifton
Bristol
BS8 2BN

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The overall effectiveness of the school is good. Pupils from all backgrounds and starting points are genuinely valued and make good progress, supported by good teaching. Relationships are strong and there is very good support for learning. Leadership, management and governance are a strength. The school is resourceful and benefits from a relatively high income per pupil. It uses these resources well and gives **good value for money**.

THE SCHOOL'S MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES ARE:

- Pupils achieve well overall and, except in ICT and in Years 10 and 11 in mathematics, standards are generally now in line with national expectations.
- Results are steadily improving in national tests and examinations.
- Teaching is good overall in most subjects and at all levels, particularly in the sixth form.
- Pupils receive very good support and guidance based on analysis of pupil performance data.
- There is a very good range of strategies for valuing and including all pupils. As a result, they very much like coming to school and enjoy good relationships.
- There are strong links with parents, including tireless work with those harder to reach and with the community.
- Leadership, management and governance are effective in promoting an inclusive school with good achievement; leadership of the sixth form is very good.
- The length of lessons creates some problems for lesson planning and managing pupils' behaviour and punctuality.
- Attendance is too low in the sixth form.
- Shortcomings in accommodation mean that pupils' use of ICT in subjects across the curriculum does not always meet national requirements.
- In not all subjects do teachers use their assessment of pupils' work well enough to secure improvements in teaching and learning.

The school has improved well since the last inspection in 1998. Results, particularly in GCSE examinations, have improved and teaching is better. Support for pupils with SEN, or for whom English is not their first language, has improved.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Overall, pupils' achievement is good at all ages. In the national tests at the end of Year 9, there has been significant improvement over the past two years. The standards reached in 2004 compared very well with similar schools. The proportion of pupils who reach the higher levels in the tests has improved overall but remains somewhat low in English. At GCSE level, the proportion of pupils achieving five or more grades A* to C has been in line with or above the average for similar schools for five years. Results in 2004 look to be particularly strong. Based on each pupil's starting point, all achieve well, making good progress in most subjects from Years 7 to 11. The work seen by inspectors suggests that standards are now coming closer into line with national average expectations. Only in ICT and, in Years 10 and 11, in mathematics, do current standards fall below. In the sixth form, students' achievement is good in most subjects inspected. Results in A-level examinations remain below the national average but are steadily improving.

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	E	E	E	D
mathematics	E	E	E	C
science	E	E	D	A

Key: A – well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average.
 Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 6.

Performance compared with:		all schools			similar schools
		2001	2002	2003	2003
Year 11	GCSE/GNVQ examinations	B	C	C	A
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 pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 9.

Note: Based on data unvalidated at the time of this report, results in the tests at the end of Year 9 in 2004 show a further improved comparison with similar schools – above average in English and well above average in mathematics and science. Results in the GCSE examinations in 2004 follow those for 2003 in being well above average compared to similar schools.

Pupils' personal qualities are generally positive. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development overall is good. Their behaviour is satisfactory overall. Punctuality to lessons is a weakness, as is attendance of sixth formers generally. Pupils' respect for each other's values, beliefs and cultures is very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching is good overall. In all year groups 7 to 11, it is very good in art and sociology and good in all other subjects except mathematics and, in some year groups, English, citizenship, religious education and business education, where it is satisfactory. Sixth form teaching is at least good in all subjects inspected and very good in mathematics, art and history. Teaching promotes equality of opportunity well and very well in science, ICT, art and physical education. This valuing of pupils, whatever their starting point, helps to ensure that all make good progress. The school has a full complement of subject specialists except in religious education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides strongly principled leadership which focuses on valuing and raising the achievement of all pupils. This is well supported by the senior leadership team, team leaders and governors. Leadership of the sixth form is very good. Management uses data well to monitor performance and takes appropriate actions to secure improvement. Strategies for recruiting and developing staff work well. Governors know the school's main strengths and weaknesses well and have high expectations of the school's leadership.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and carers are generally happy with the provision the school makes. They are pleased that their children like going to school and that staff expect pupils to work hard. Their main concern is about the behaviour of a minority. The vast majority of pupils like their school and judge that they are taught well and expected to do their best. Their concerns are about behaviour, bullying and harassment. About one in five of those in Years 10 and 11 feel that staff do not treat them fairly.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS THE SCHOOL SHOULD DO TO ENSURE THAT ACHIEVEMENT CONTINUES TO IMPROVE ARE:

- Improve standards in ICT and, in Years 10 and 11, in mathematics.
- Review the length of lessons to ensure that lesson planning is more effective, that teaching time is efficiently used and that opportunities for behaviour and punctuality to deteriorate, in and out of lessons, are minimized.
- Take steps to improve attendance in the sixth form.
- Strengthen teachers' understanding and practice of using their assessments of pupils' work so that pupils better understand how they can improve, particularly in foundation subjects.
- Address shortcomings in accommodation for teaching ICT as a subject and across the curriculum;

AND, TO MEET STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS:

- ensure that the governors' policy on the daily act of collective worship is matched by practice.
- Ensure that all pupils in Years 10/11 cover the national requirements for ICT.

THE SIXTH FORM

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

The sixth form is of average size. It offers a range of academic and vocational courses, enhanced through shared provision with three other schools.

HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

The sixth form is very effective. Teaching is good in all subjects and very good in mathematics and art and design. Results in A-level examinations are below the national average but are improving and students' achievement, when compared with their previous attainment, is good in most subjects and very good in mathematics, history and art and design. The achievement of female students in 2004 was very good across the board. Students have positive attitudes towards their learning and to the school and relationships are very good. There is a good choice of both academic and vocational subjects to study, enhanced by collaboration with other schools in the area and the adjacent City Learning Centre and a wide and interesting range of enrichment activities is offered. Leadership of the sixth form is strong and it is well run on a day-to-day basis, although arrangements for monitoring student absence and punctuality are unsatisfactory.

Strengths

- Teaching is good and students achieve well.
- Students appreciate the good teaching and the helpfulness of their teachers.
- The school provides a good range of traditional A-level and vocational courses and good use is made of collaborative arrangements with other institutions.
- There is a wide range of enrichment activities available.
- The school's business and enterprise status has had a positive effect on the school's

- performance and its links with the wider community.
- The sixth form is inclusive and provides well for all its students.
- It is very strongly led and well managed.

What could be improved*

- Student absence and lack of punctuality to lessons has a negative impact on learning.
- Procedures for monitoring student absence are unsatisfactory.

**The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan. Strengths and areas for improvement in individual subjects are identified in the sections on individual subjects in the full report.*

THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN INDIVIDUAL CURRICULUM AREAS

The table below shows overall judgements about the provision in the subjects and courses that were inspected in the sixth form. Judgements 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	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
Mathematics	Provision in mathematics is very good . Standards are above average and students achieve very well because of very good teaching which sets high levels of challenge for students.
Biology	Provision made in biology is good . Standards are improving and are above the national average. Leadership and management of the subject are very good.
Physics	Provision in physics is good . Standards are improving and are above average in Year 12. Teaching is good and the subject is very well led and managed.
Business studies	Good . Students on all courses achieve well due to good teaching and developing links with local business and industry. They have good attitudes to work and standards are at least in line with the national average overall.
Information and communication technology	Provision in ICT in the sixth form is good . The AVCE course meets the learning needs of the students and is well taught, so that standards are rising.
Art and design	Provision is very good . Very good teaching ensures that students achieve very well and reach above-average standards.
Drama	Drama provision is good . Teaching is good; teachers have good subject knowledge and encourage the students to develop their own ideas.
History	Provision in history is good . Teachers have good strategies to help students build on their previous learning. Achievement is good.
English	Provision in English is good . Achievement is good because teachers encourage students to discuss their work to promote good understanding.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	The school makes good provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. Procedures to ensure that students work in a healthy and safe environment are very good . Induction arrangements for students are excellent and advice on subjects and courses is thorough . Guidance on higher education and the world of work is good . Monitoring of student progress is very good . The school involves students well through seeking, valuing and acting on their views.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	The leadership of the sixth form is very good . There is a clear sense of purpose and a determination to drive up standards. Links with other institutions are well managed and forward-looking. Management is good . Leaders know their students well and there are good procedures for caring for students and helping them progress. Procedures for monitoring their attendance and punctuality are, however, unsatisfactory.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

What students like about the sixth	What they feel could be improved
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form	
Teaching is challenging and demanding. Teachers are accessible and helpful. Work completed is well assessed. Staff are expert in their subjects.	The school does not respond to the views of students. There are insufficient enrichment activities. There is no-one in school who knows them well.

Inspectors assessed the judgements of the students and found that the positive views are well borne out by inspection findings. In contradiction to the views expressed in the questionnaire responses, it was clear that staff responsible for the sixth form know their students well and that the school provides a wide range of activities to extend students' interests beyond the subjects they study. Students are well represented on the school council, which is set up to listen to students' views and, where appropriate, act on them.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AND STUDENTS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

The achievement of pupils and sixth form students is **good**. The standards of current work are generally in line with the **average** national expectations. Results in national tests and GCSE examinations in recent years have been improving steadily and are now generally **above average** compared to similar schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well, whatever their starting point, in most subjects.
- Current standards are increasingly in line with average national expectations in most subjects.
- Results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 and in GCSE examinations in 2004 show further improvement in comparison with similar schools, being well above the average for such schools at GCSE level.
- These results show that, while there have been improvements, relatively few pupils reach the higher levels in the end of Year 9 tests in English; similarly, the proportion reaching the higher GCSE grades varies between subjects and remains below average in too many.
- While disparities in attainment levels between boys and girls and between different ethnic groups generally parallel those found nationally, the school has worked hard to identify underachievers and is generally securing the same rate of progress for these pupils as for others.
- The school adds above average value to pupils' attainment as they move through the school.

Commentary

1. Regardless of starting point, all pupils in all year groups achieve well in most subjects. In mathematics and design and technology and, in Years 10 and 11, in modern foreign languages, citizenship and physical education, achievement is satisfactory rather than good. In art and sociology, achievement is very good in Years 10 and 11.
2. The school puts great effort into identifying those pupils at risk of underachievement. It then provides them with supplementary programmes which raise their self-esteem and secure their ability to access the curriculum more effectively. The impact of these initiatives is becoming apparent, for instance in humanities and science, where analysis of results in GCSE examinations in 2004 shows that previous relative underachievement by particular sub-groups has significantly improved.
3. Standards of work seen during the inspection are broadly in line with average national expectations in all subjects except in ICT and, in Years 10 and 11, in mathematics, where they are below average. This is likely to be a reflection of past staffing difficulties, which have now largely been resolved.

4. Results in national tests and examinations in 2003 showed that the school was adding average value to pupils during Years 7-9 and above average value during Years 10 and 11. This pattern of improvement looks set to continue, based on the unvalidated data currently available in relation to tests and examinations in 2004. In the end of Year 9 tests in 2004, results in English improved on those shown below for 2003, with a significant improvement in the proportion of pupils attaining higher levels. Mathematics results also improved, again including the proportion who reached higher levels.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.7 (29.2)	33.4 (33.3)
mathematics	32.0 (31.1)	35.4 (34.7)
science	31.7 (30.3)	33.6 (33.3)

There were 202 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

5. The GCSE examinations in 2004 also saw improvements, based on unvalidated data, on the pattern of results shown in the table below. As in 2003, they are well above average for similar schools and coming increasingly closely in line with average national expectations. In a number of subjects, the proportion attaining the higher grades A* to C remains below average, including in English, mathematics and modern foreign languages.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	43 (42)	52 (50)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	90 (94)	91 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	97 (98)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	32.6 (31.9)	34.7 (34.8)

There were 188 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

6. The standards of literacy in the school are good. The focus is on improving literacy for Years 7 and 8 pupils, in particular on raising pupils' reading ages, on writing appropriately and on learning vocabulary specific to each subject area. Pupils are good at speaking and listening skills and levels of reading and writing are improving.
7. Pupils' competence in mathematics is close to average and is sufficiently well developed to enable them to cope with learning in other subjects. They are able to transfer mathematical skills effectively to other areas of the curriculum.
8. When pupils are able to use computers they do so competently, but opportunities throughout the curriculum are somewhat limited.
9. Overall, the achievement of pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is good. Pupils with marked literacy difficulties make good progress with reading and writing. Pupils who experience behavioural difficulties achieve well in terms of targets set for their attendance and classroom behaviour.
10. The achievement of gifted and talented pupils is good but more attention is needed to ensure pupils with high attainment are challenged in all subjects to improve their achievement over time.

Sixth form

11. In 2003, the examination performance of students was below the national average, but showed an improvement over the previous year's results. The performance of female

students was markedly higher than that of male students. The proportion of students achieving higher grades (A and B) rose sharply over the previous year, but remained well below the national average. Again, the main increase in higher grades was from female students. The proportion of students achieving a grade of some sort in post-16 examinations also rose in 2003 and was close to the national average.

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	85.2 (78.4)	89.4 (92.6)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	17.4 (14.7)	32.6 (35.3)
Average point score per pupil	203.9 (172.7)	258.2 (263.3)

There were 38 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

12. In individual subjects where there were sufficient entries for a comparison to be made, results in vocational business studies and in A-level history were above average compared with sixth forms nationally and sociology results were in line with the national picture. In chemistry and English literature, they were well below the national average.
13. The 2004 examination results were not as high as those of the previous year, but this reflected the attainment of the students on entry. The achievement of all students, relative to their prior attainment, was good and in the case of female students it was well above expectations.
14. Standards seen during the inspection were around the average in most subjects, below average in information and communication technology and Year 13 physics and above average in mathematics, art and design, biology and in Year 12 physics. Some students in physics find the associated mathematics difficult and this has an effect on their confidence in going forward. Students' achievement was at least good in all subjects and very good in mathematics and art and design.
15. Good achievement is an effect of good teaching, high expectations on the part of teachers and the application and enthusiasm of many of the students for their work. Students with special educational needs achieve very well in relation to their difficulties. Those students with English as an additional language achieve well and sometimes very well.
16. Standards of literacy in the sixth form are good. Levels of speaking and listening are high in most subjects, with opportunities for extended writing. Levels of reading are good. Students' mathematical skills enable them to cope well in the majority of subjects. Students use ICT effectively to meet their learning needs. They have enough access to computers for private study. In most subjects, teachers encourage students to use computers for research and presentation. Some good teaching using ICT was seen during the inspection, for example in science and history.

Pupils' and students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes are **good** and their behaviour **satisfactory**. Attendance is **satisfactory overall but unsatisfactory in the sixth form**. Punctuality is **unsatisfactory**. Overall spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' relationships with others are good.
- The school promotes racial harmony well.
- The school deals effectively with all forms of harassment.
- Monitoring of attendance in the sixth form is unsatisfactory.
- The efforts of parents and carers to ensure the attendance of their children are unsatisfactory.
- Behaviour, while generally satisfactory and often good, does deteriorate towards the end of some long lessons and during movement between lessons.

Commentary

17. Behaviour is satisfactory overall. Pupils mostly behave well both in and out of lessons but a significant minority of pupils sometimes present silly or disruptive behaviour, particularly when teaching is not adequately directed in the long lessons and/or when staff do not adhere to the school's behaviour policy.
18. Pupils' punctuality is unsatisfactory overall. Many pupils arrive late for registration and too frequently teaching is interrupted when pupils arrive late for lessons. At lunchtime and break, pupils mostly behave well. Pupils have a good attitude to school and to their learning. In the main, they very much enjoy coming to school and demonstrate a good level of confidence and self-esteem. When given the opportunity, they are willing to be enterprising and take responsibility. Pupils are pleased to be elected as members of the Form and School Council and senior pupils are trained as peer mentors to younger pupils.
19. The school deals effectively with all forms of harassment. Instances of bullying are rare, but when they do occur, staff deal with them immediately and very effectively. The school very successfully promotes racial harmony. Pupils come from a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds and cultures and they integrate extremely well. The school is a well-balanced, secure and happy community.
20. Pupils have a satisfactory respect for the feelings, values and belief of others. They respect their own belongings, the property of the school and other pupils. Pupils are pleased to be given their own lockers and the school has little litter and no graffiti.
21. The level of exclusion shown in the table below reflects a marked reduction from previous years. All exclusions are made for good reason and are meticulously recorded. Following a behaviour audit of all schools in the Brent Borough, the school has been allocated places in the Roundwood Exclusion Centre, which ensures that excluded pupils receive full-time education during their exclusion period. The school makes every effort to avoid pupils being excluded. It makes good use of its Learning Support Centre to offer advice and guidance for pupils in imminent danger of being excluded.

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

Categories used in the Annual School Census	Number of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	194	3	1
White – Irish	20	2	0
White – any other White background	81	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	67	1	2
Mixed – White and Black African	18	5	0
Mixed – White and Asian	15	2	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	41	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	192	0	1
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	94	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	17	1	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	22	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	179	20	3
Black or Black British – African	122	5	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	33	4	1
Chinese	8	0	0
Any other ethnic group	71	3	0
No ethnic group recorded	6	0	0

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

22. Attendance is satisfactory in Years 7-11. The school has good procedures to promote attendance including the appointment of a full-time Education Welfare Officer, although some parents and carers do not make sufficient effort to ensure the attendance of their children.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	8.0	School data	1.6
National data	7.2	National data	1.1

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

23. Pupils' spiritual development is encouraged through 'Thought for The Week', which is displayed throughout the school. Assemblies are planned around themes such as 'Expectations', 'Respect' and 'Emotions'. Most form tutors do not extend these themes and opportunities are lost.
24. Pupils develop good social skills in lessons when given appropriate opportunities, working co-operatively in pairs or teams. They share experiences harmoniously, respecting social differences, feelings and beliefs.
25. Pupils develop good moral understanding. They are clear about the school's expectations, through clearly displayed and promoted codes of conduct. They are aware

of the effects of their behaviour on others. The school works well as an inclusive and harmonious community.

26. The rich, cultural diversity within the school community is very well reflected in vibrant, high quality displays of work. They appreciate and draw inspiration from the achievements of famous people from many cultures, both ancient and contemporary and try to emulate them. They enjoy well-planned visits to places of worship, Kew Gardens, musical venues, theatres and museums, as part of their cultural and social development.
27. Pupils with behavioural difficulties show very positive attitudes when they are working on specific areas of their behaviour, such as anger management or conflict resolution. Pupils with marked literacy difficulties, working in small groups, have positive attitudes and work well.

Sixth form

28. Students have good attitudes to their learning. They show good interest in school life and, in the main, are willing to be enterprising and take responsibility, for example by acting as peer mentors for pupils in the main school and helping at school functions.
29. Attendance, at 80 per cent in Year 12 and 88 per cent in Year 13, is unsatisfactory. Many pupils are unwilling to observe the signing in procedures and as a result staff are often unaware if students are present at school.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

The quality of teaching and learning overall is **good** and this applies at all ages. The highest proportion of good or better lessons is found in the sixth form.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 179 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1 (1%)	39 (22%)	78 (44%)	53 (30%)	7 (4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching was good or better in two thirds or more of all lessons seen in science, art, business, modern foreign languages, history, music, sociology and physical education.
- The proportion of good teaching was too low and the incidence of unsatisfactory teaching too high, in mathematics and design and technology.
- Teachers' command of and enthusiasm for, their subjects is a great strength, although teachers working outside their specialist area in humanities can inhibit learning.
- Teachers strive tirelessly to promote equality of opportunity in lessons.
- There is good support for pupils with special educational needs.

- Some higher attaining pupils are insufficiently challenged by the teaching in Years 10 and 11 in particular.
- While there is a good range of teaching styles and a variety of activities in many lessons, teachers do not all plan adequately, particularly for those lessons that are 90 minutes long.

Commentary

30. The quality of teaching is much enhanced by teachers' command of their subject and their enthusiasm in teaching it. This is a particularly strong feature in English, science and art lessons; it is good in most other subjects, while in geography, religious education and citizenship it is not as good, due to teachers working outside their specialisms. However, they work with commitment to overcome any disadvantages this might bring to learning. Higher attaining pupils do sometimes experience frustration however.
31. Teachers' planning is good in most subjects and satisfactory overall in mathematics and design and technology. Where planning is less good, the lessons do not engage pupils as well nor provide them with sufficient challenge. This leads to restless behaviour which sometimes exposes teachers' underdeveloped behaviour management skills. There is evidence in some lessons, particularly in Years 10 and 11, where higher attaining pupils are insufficiently challenged. This was observed in English, mathematics, science, history and business education. In religious education, planning is unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9 in that it is insufficiently related to the locally agreed syllabus for the subject.
32. In most subjects, teachers use a wide range of strategies to ensure that all pupils make the same rate of progress, whatever their starting point, although the range is less broad in English, mathematics and design and technology. That all pupils are equally valued is amply demonstrated by the commitment to mixed-attainment teaching groups throughout the school, despite the additional pressures that this puts on teachers' planning. In the best cases, planning and activities are well matched to the wide ability range in the class.
33. Resources are used well in most subjects but in mathematics the widespread use of resource cards is insufficiently motivating for a significant minority of pupils. Due to lack of familiarity with the subject, the use of resources is also less good in religious education and citizenship.
34. Time is not well used in a number of lessons. The almost habitual lateness to lessons by a significant minority of pupils reduces the time available for teaching and learning. The shorter 45-minute lessons do not always provide adequate time for teachers to assess, via a plenary at the end of the lesson, the learning that has taken place. The longer 90 minute lessons provide a significant challenge for effective planning and, in too many cases, these lessons fail to sustain for the full lesson length, so time is wasted. In the worst cases, behaviour then begins to deteriorate. The long lesson length has, on balance, a negative effect on behaviour.
35. While teachers' use of homework to reinforce and extend learning is satisfactory overall, it is good only in science, geography, history and art.
36. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers know the needs of these pupils because they have access to a range of assessment information and very good quality informative individual education plans. Generally, they use this information to

structure lessons so that these pupils can achieve well. However, some subject teachers do not adapt strategies and resources well enough.

37. Teaching assistants support pupils well because they are placed where they can use their areas of expertise best; for example, one who has acting experience is attached to the drama department and helps with sessions on anger management including role-play. The teaching assistants have had training in behavioural management but, as yet, many are not well enough trained in other aspects of special educational needs, because they are new to the school. The teaching of pupils in withdrawal groups for literacy is good and pupils make good progress.
38. There are clear, robust systems for the identification and monitoring of pupils with special educational needs. These comprehensive assessment systems use the previous attainment data, annual reading assessments, monitoring by teaching assistants in class and the 'cause for concern system' to identify pupils who may need further help. Detailed literacy and learning assessments are carried out by the special educational needs co-ordinator, to identify further the area of difficulty and devise an intervention.
39. There is effective, but limited, support for pupils with English as an additional language. The specialist teacher carries out an immediate and thorough assessment of pupils coming into the school and provides a small amount of withdrawal teaching for those who are at an early stage of language acquisition. Some good quality specialist support is available in class. Advice is given to subject teachers on the best ways to teach these pupils and targets are provided, so that many teachers are able to structure their lessons well. Pupils who are more proficient are grouped with others for peer support. However, there are no specialist teaching assistants to support them.
40. In response to the generally good teaching and the all-round high quality support which pupils receive, they learn well in nearly all subjects. Where teaching is satisfactory rather than good, learning similarly is satisfactory. In general, due to the subject knowledge, expertise and enthusiasm of teachers, pupils acquire the expected skills, knowledge and understanding. They apply themselves well to their studies in science, geography, history, art, music and physical education, although not as well as they might in their other subjects where teachers' planning does not always keep learning fully focused. Only in science, geography, history and, in Years 10 and 11, art, are pupils demonstrating the ability to work well independently, for instance via the use of ICT. In other subjects, this is generally satisfactory but teachers' planning does not always give sufficient opportunity for pupils to work in this way, or collaboratively. In some lessons, for instance in religious education, teachers' narrow questioning restricts pupils' opportunities to develop their higher order skills.

Assessment

41. The school has developed satisfactory systems for assessing pupil progress and there is consistent use of these procedures by departments. Target setting takes place which is based on pupils' prior attainment. Achievement against these targets is regularly reviewed in all subjects. There is also effective use of assessment information by teachers to match work in lessons to pupils' National Curriculum levels and GCSE grades. While the marking of pupils' work provides feedback on overall quality, there is insufficient advice, in most subjects, on how to improve. The practice of using the evidence from teachers' assessments to review lesson planning and to set curriculum

targets for pupils is yet to be adequately established, particularly in the foundation subjects. Although pupils may know their level in a subject, they do not necessarily know what this means or what they have to do to improve their work.

Sixth form

42. The teaching is good in all the subjects inspected and very good in art and design, history and mathematics. Teachers have good subject knowledge and expertise and high expectations of their students. Lessons proceed with pace and challenge. Assessment procedures are good and staff are constantly available to give help, advice and encouragement where needed.
43. There is consistently good teaching in English, where expert questioning strategies promote good understanding of the texts studied and the quality of teaching in business studies is enhanced by the teachers' first-hand experience of the world of industry, business and commerce. Although lessons in physics are generally challenging, teachers do not always make effective use of questioning to consolidate learning. In biology, teachers work hard to increase students' confidence. In history, teachers have a good understanding of students' needs and good discussion techniques in history lessons help to reinforce understanding. In drama and in art and design, teachers encourage students to develop their own thinking and interpretations, promoting greater appreciation of the subject.
44. There is very good support for students with English as an additional language and special educational needs because teachers know the pupils well and adopt an approach to meet individual needs.

The curriculum

The breadth of curriculum opportunities available to pupils is **good** and there are **very good** opportunities for pupils to enrich their curriculum experience. Staffing of the curriculum is **good** and accommodation and resources are **satisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The wide range of opportunities for curriculum enrichment and extension.
- The steps taken to ensure that there is equality of access and opportunity.
- The design of the curriculum which strengthens teachers' knowledge of pupils' progress and needs.
- Current lesson length reduces the impact of many lessons.
- Provision for pupils with different special educational needs.
- Supporting the curriculum with qualified specialist teachers, except in religious education where there is no specialist.

Commentary

45. The curriculum for pupils in Years 7-9 meets statutory requirements. Its organisation on a faculty basis means that pupils are taught by fewer different teachers than is normally the case. This helps to ensure that teachers know pupils well and brings stability to the pupils' working week. This stability is further enhanced by the school's commitment to teaching pupils in mixed-attainment groups, which is broadly successful, although sometimes affected by lesson planning which is not well enough matched to the range of abilities in

the group. In a number of single sex classes run in Years 7 to 9, the impact has been variable and early indications are that boys in such classes benefit more than girls. Effectiveness is dependent on the degree to which form tutors and teachers of these single-sex groups have considered the particular implications for resourcing and planning.

46. In Years 10 and 11, there is some flexibility, including the option for a small number of pupils to follow a vocational course at the local college. A greater number of pupils benefits from in-school flexibility. For instance, some black African or Caribbean pupils attend specially organized sessions within the school day which form part of the school's successful strategy to raise attainment levels of identified pupils. The school goes to great lengths to ensure that there is equality of opportunity for all pupils to access the curriculum.
47. Some pupils in Years 10 and 11 who take the media studies option find it harder to cover the national programme of study for ICT than their counterparts who take a specialist course in ICT or business studies.
48. Lessons are currently either 45 or 90 minutes long, following a recent review of the structure of the school day. That review gave careful consideration to lunch arrangements and the balance of time between subjects. However, it is clear from observation during the inspection that both the shorter and, particularly, the longer lessons are generating significant difficulties. The shorter lessons do not give adequate time for a plenary session, which teachers need to assess the progress pupils have made and ensure that homework tasks are properly understood and recorded. The longer lessons are found by many teachers to be difficult to sustain at an appropriate pace, however well they are prepared. As a result, behaviour in a significant number of these lessons becomes restless towards the end and teaching and learning time is lost. When pupils leave these lessons in a relatively restless manner, their behaviour on the way to their next lesson is frequently unsatisfactory, too often leading to lateness and more lost teaching and learning time.
49. Pupils with special educational needs have the same access to the curriculum as all pupils. In addition, there is a very good range of effective interventions for those with learning and behavioural difficulties, for example, the mentoring scheme, Learning Support Unit to help the more vulnerable pupils to continue their education and groups to help pupils manage their anger and resolve conflicts.
50. For pupils who the school has identified as being gifted or talented, the school provides a very good enrichment programme. This has been very successful in raising achievement. The school provides a very good range of taster courses and visits to universities and of workshops and extension lessons, in and out of school. Recently, subjects have begun to initiate a rolling programme of enhanced provision, beginning with Year 7 and continuing up through the school. However, monitoring of the effectiveness of provision in subjects is not sufficiently coordinated and matched to other data to provide an analysis of what individual pupils are gaining from different sources.
51. Provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) is good, following a time when it has not been paid sufficient attention. The recently devised teaching programme is now delivered discretely and regularly through timetabled lessons, which sometimes are linked effectively with the theme of assemblies which take place on the same day. Curriculum handbooks publicise topics effectively to parents.

Planning has taken into account good practice and has established good links with outside agencies and speakers. In Years 7 to 9, support for cultural events like black history month is very good. In Years 10 and 11, there is effective teaching of sex education and very good teaching about how to deal with and talk about emotions. There are appropriate policies in place and these are being reviewed to ensure that the context within which sex education is taught promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The teaching programme includes special theme days and gives appropriate emphasis to a healthy schools programme. Good links are planned to support pupils' work related learning. Good management carries out regular monitoring of quality.

52. There is a very good programme of enrichment activities provided by subject departments, the gifted and talented programme and the extended school partnership. Many pupils take advantage of the booster classes and homework clubs, foreign trips, historical and artistic visits and workshops. This raises expectations and broadens pupils' horizons; it prepares them for the world of opportunities that are available beyond the school.

BUSINESS AND ENTERPRISE

53. The school has made good progress in helping students achieve business and enterprise skills since it recently gained specialist school status. Staff have introduced several new initiatives to help students learn to become more enterprising through improving links with local business and industry. The school has a good partnership with the City Learning Centre (CLC) and local business advisers to support the flourishing Young Enterprise scheme in Year 12. Several new vocational courses have been introduced, most significantly an applied ICT GCSE course for a large proportion of Year 10 pupils and several new sixth form courses including BTEC diploma in personal finance, where six-week work placements are planned. AVCE art has made a very good start. The faculty has a flourishing partnership with a leading investment bank and its Cloth of Gold project was very successful. Sixth form students have visited a number of partner primary schools, taking on the role of teachers to help young children gain enterprise skills. In most subjects, planning is still underway to develop partnerships with local organisations to enrich students' achievements in business and enterprise.

STAFFING, ACCOMMODATION AND RESOURCES

54. The staffing of the school is good and teachers are well qualified to meet the needs of the curriculum, except in religious education where there is no subject specialist. The school gives good support to a large number of newly qualified teachers and there is an effective induction programme in place. The match of support staff to the needs of the curriculum is generally satisfactory and is good in modern foreign languages, mathematics, science and ICT. However, there is too little support for the few pupils at the early stages of learning the English language. At present there is no training programme for teaching assistants.
55. The school is set in extensive grounds. The very effective site management ensures that the good accommodation is well looked after with little sign of damage or graffiti. Rooms are light and airy and made attractive with displays. Accommodation in science is excellent but rooms for ICT, art and music are cramped when teaching large classes.

56. Overall, the resources for the school are good and this marks an improvement on the previous inspection judgement. There are good stocks of books and equipment in each department to allow the curriculum to be taught effectively. The library has sufficient new stock and is used well. Whilst there is very good use of ICT in business education for the vocational groups, subjects such as design and technology, music and particularly the humanities subjects do not have sufficient access. To support teaching, the school is gradually increasing its number of interactive whiteboards, particularly in mathematics and science, where they are generally used well when whole class teaching takes place. However, they remain under-exploited in some classrooms.

Sixth form

57. The school offers a good range of traditional A-level and vocational courses. The largest proportion of students follow the AVCE course in business studies. A range of other foundation, intermediate and advanced vocational courses are available in business, ICT and in art and design. A new BTEC national diploma course in personal finance has been successfully introduced. The proportion of students following a vocational course is much higher than in most sixth forms nationally. The positive impact of the school's specialist status as a Business and Enterprise College is described in paragraph 53.
58. A range of A-level courses is available, some of which take place through consortium arrangements with other schools. The school makes effective use of these arrangements to enhance and broaden the learning opportunities that it can offer. Students are well briefed about what sixth form courses entail before they make their choices. There is good provision through the personal, social and health education programme (PSHE) to prepare students for higher education and the world of work. Very good arrangements are made for students' horizons to be broadened through a well-planned enrichment programme, which involves students in community activities, developing their key skills in computers, learning modern and ancient languages, attending lectures on a range of contemporary topics, as well as the expected range of indoor and outdoor sport and fitness activities. The sixth form is increasing in size as a result of the broader curriculum that the school is able to offer and some students are being drawn in from other schools and beyond the immediate catchment area. Overall, the curriculum is well suited to the school's post-16 population and the opportunities provided produce a well-integrated, confident and enthusiastic group of students.
59. In some business studies lessons, teachers and students have to work hard to overcome the restricted size of the available classrooms and insufficient computer provision.

Care, guidance and support

The school makes **good** provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. The provision of support, advice and guidance to pupils is **very good**. The involvement of pupils in making decisions about the running of the school is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Procedures to ensure that pupils work in a healthy and safe environment are very good.
- Induction arrangements for pupils are excellent.
- Relationships at the school are very good.
- Child protection procedures are good.

- Pupils have good access to support, advice and guidance.

COMMENTARY

60. The school makes good provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. The school has appointed two child protection officers, who are very aware of their role and have received up-to-date training. The child protection policy is detailed, relevant and up to date. Training has been arranged for all other members of staff, including non-teaching assistants. The school has very effective procedures to ensure pupils' work in a healthy and safe environment. The health and safety policy is detailed and concise. Regular inspection of the buildings and grounds are conducted by the health and safety officer and premises manager. All departments carry out detailed risk assessment. The fire alarm is tested weekly and regular fire drills take place.
61. The school offers a good standard of support, advice and guidance to its pupils. Pupils' pastoral progress is well monitored by an effective recording system and regular meetings take place between form tutors, year co-ordinators and subject leaders to discuss pupils' progress and identify possible problems. Pupils presenting difficulties are quickly identified and, if necessary, referred to one of the numerous agencies used by the school, including learning support mentors, educational psychologists, adolescent psychotherapists and referral room staff.
62. Relationships at the school are very good. Pupils interviewed during the inspection week confirmed that they feel well supported by staff and they know to whom to turn for guidance and help. They feel that their views are taken into account through the year councils and the school council, and that their opinions matter.
63. Induction arrangements for pupils new to Year 7 are excellent. Every new pupil is given a personal interview and the school arranges an induction day in July where pupils are given taster lessons and meet senior staff. An additional induction evening is arranged for pupils and parents when pupils meet their new form tutors. A summer school is held for pupils identified from data as needing booster help in English and mathematics. A summer school is also held for identified pupils at the end of Year 7.
64. Within the first week of starting at school, a progress review date is arranged for pupils and parents when targets are set for pupils' academic and personal development. A social evening is arranged shortly after for parents to meet tutors. As a result of the excellent and well thought out induction arrangements, pupils make an excellent start to their school life.
65. The identification of pupils with special educational needs, prior to entry in the school and thereafter, is very good. There is a wide range of assessments in place which link to the school's assessment system. Additionally, there is a timetabled meeting for all staff involved with pupils with learning and behavioural difficulties, as well as other professionals linked with the school. This facilitates an overview of provision and very effective monitoring of the pupils who are receiving interventions. Pupils are involved in the reviews of their progress and those pupils with statements attend their own annual review meetings.

SIXTH FORM

66. The school offers a very good standard of support and advice to all its sixth form students. Very good use is made of the Connexions service, which offers advice and counselling to all students if requested. The sixth formers interviewed confirmed that they felt they had very good access to support, advice and guidance and that their views were taken into account. Advice on further education opportunities together with information on future careers is freely available and students feel they are prepared for life in the world of further education and work in a multicultural society.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are **good**. The school has **very good** links with the community and other schools and colleges. The extended services provided by the school and educational support programme are **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has excellent procedures to ensure satisfaction when dealing with complaints.
- Mechanisms for the transfer of pupils are good.
- Provision to parents of information about the school and the curriculum are good, with some very good features.
- Reports to parents on their children's standards and progress are generally good, but with areas for improvement.

COMMENTARY

67. The school has good links with parents. The prospectus is a well-produced document giving detailed information about the school, ethos and policies and curriculum. Each year, parents are provided with very helpful detail about each of the courses their children will be following. Weekly newsletters are produced, giving high quality information on current events and interests.
68. The school arranges a very productive system of three review days per annum, when parents and pupils are given the opportunity to discuss progress and targets in some detail. The headteacher and senior leadership team are available to see parents at any time by appointment.
Reports on pupils' progress are produced annually. While generally helpful, teachers' comments are not always sufficiently detailed. Reports do not contain a separate judgement on the progress being made in citizenship.
69. The school has effective links with the parents of pupils with special educational needs but, despite this, not all parents of statemented pupils attend their child's annual review meeting. The individual education plans indicate ways in which parents can support their child's learning.
70. The school has very good procedures for monitoring complaints and has compiled a detailed complaints policy. The school has surveyed individual ethnic groups of parents to obtain their views on school matters and has arranged a large number of courses for parents including parenting skills, education systems and understanding the teaching of English and mathematics. Parents are warmly welcomed into school to help and a small number of parents do so, by for instance mentoring pupils, helping with school visits and delivering talks on their life experiences. Their help is greatly appreciated. A small but active PTA committee arranges a series of social and information-gathering meetings, which are generally well supported.
71. The school has very good links with the community. A number of prominent local companies give financial support to the school and help with marketing strategies and expertise. Strong links exist with the South Kilburn New Deal for Communities group and the school receives significant funding from this source to fund out of hours learning for its pupils.
72. The range of extended services provided by the school is excellent. The school has organised a wide range of activities and services, often beyond the school day, to meet the needs of its pupils, their families and the wider community. The school has received substantial funding from the Department for Education and Skills, amongst other things, to extend the use of its site to provide a base for differing community groups for social,

religious and cultural activities. The school works in close partnership with local agencies such as the African-Caribbean 'Boys to Men' project. Links with the Youth and Community Service are strong and productive. The school is a base for Brent Summer University, which provides access to all youngsters in the community and the school provides a meeting base for the Brent Adult Community Service facility, providing some 30 adult education classes per week. In addition, the school also provides a meeting place for the local Neighbourhood Assembly, local theatre school, a community Saturday school and provides facilities for a local sports club. A City Learning Centre has been opened on site providing a wide range of ICT based opportunities for the local community, including pupils.

73. The school is the base for the South Brent Schools Behaviour Education Support Team and a group of multi-agency staff including educational psychologist, education welfare officer, child and adolescent psychotherapist and youth offending team, all work at the school to support community and school activities.
74. The school is making a growing and vital contribution to the development of the surrounding community and the extent to which the school has forged links with the local community and voluntary groups is particularly impressive.
75. Links with other schools and colleges are excellent. The school's key participation in a number of partnership arrangements with local schools, through the Leading Edge Collaborative and Excellence in Cities, is generating significant liaison opportunities and improved professional development of staff. Primary school pupils regularly use the ICT suite in the City Learning Centre and school staff, from most subjects, go to partner primary schools to give demonstration lessons. The very good links with primary schools ensure that information about pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language is available to plan for the pupils on entry. The school provides funding for out-of-hours learning and expanding child care facilities in partner primary schools.
76. Links with further education establishments are excellent. Many universities send undergraduate mentors to work with sixth form students and the school takes students studying for the Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) from Kings College and the London Metropolitan University.

SIXTH FORM

77. The school is an active member of South Brent Consortium of Sixth Forms and has successful consortium arrangements with two other schools. Through the PSHE programme and personal interviews, the school makes good provision for transfer of students to further education. Students are given good information on the range of options available to them in the sixth form. Advice on university and further education courses is freely available from sixth form staff. Students interviewed thought that the advice given to them regarding careers and work was of good quality and they were confident in proceeding to the next stage of their education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good**. The leadership provided by the headteacher and other key staff is **good**. The effectiveness of management is **good**. The governance of the school is also **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's strongly principled leadership provides the school with a clear sense of direction and focus, with a very effective emphasis on inclusion and raising attainment.
- Other key staff give good support to this leadership and help ensure consistent application of agreed values across the school through effective line management.
- The leadership of the sixth form is very good.
- Subject and year team leaders have successfully generated good teamwork.
- The monitoring of pupil performance is strong and has a positive impact on achievement.
- The monitoring of quality of provision is a strength.
- Arrangements for the recruitment, induction and development of staff are good.
- While they help give direction to the school, the current school development plan is over-complex and faculty development plans also need some improvement.

Commentary

78. Governors have a clear vision for the continuing development of the school. They have as a key priority that the school should serve the richly diverse local community in a variety of ways and, in particular, in securing high levels of achievement by all pupils. They understand the challenges facing the school. They are resourceful and committed and are practised at holding the school to account for its performance. They provide very good support to the headteacher and the leadership of the school.
79. The headteacher and his senior team have a clear sense of purpose and high aspirations for the school and for all the pupils who are members of the school community. They extend that commitment to the community served by the school and have been instrumental in generating or supporting a number of initiatives aimed at raising the self-esteem of 'hard-to-reach' groups.
80. The headteacher and the leadership team have gained the loyalty of staff in general through their clear sense of purpose. Through effective line management and, by being good role models, they ensure a common sense of purpose throughout the school. Leadership and teamwork have been successfully developed at all levels and have a clear and positive impact on teaching and learning.
81. Strategic planning is in a state of some flux currently, as a new medium-term plan is being drawn up to follow on from the plan drawn up before the headteacher took up his post.. It will be helpful to all parties if this plan is effectively contextualized and sharply focussed: for instance, by making clear reference to the school's overarching values and incorporating the headteacher's review of the impact of the last plan.
82. The leadership and management of special educational needs are good. There is a clear vision of the future direction of support for both learning and behaviour. There is very close and effective working by the staff involved in special educational needs, which ensures effective information exchange between all staff, the co-ordination of interventions and the effective monitoring of outcomes.

83. Day-to-day management of the school works well and communication is efficient. Through the use and analysis of quantitative data and using other approaches to the monitoring of quality, management is able to keep performance under review and identify where specific action may be needed to address any weaknesses. The quality of pupil performance data and analyses are very high. Staff across the school use these data well and often very well, to further their understanding of how to identify those pupils needing additional attention. As yet, however, these data are not being sufficiently used to identify how teaching may need to develop.
84. There is a good and effective system of performance management, which helps the school to develop all staff and to improve teaching and learning. The school has a strong commitment to continued staff development. This is evident in the opportunities given to senior managers to go through the National Programme for Qualification for Headteachers; to the middle managers, some of whom completed the national 'leading from the middle' course and other staff through pastoral and subject specific training. The fourteen newly-qualified teachers are supported well in their first year through a system of faculty mentoring and induction arranged through a member of the senior management team. The school provides support for Initial Teacher Training (ITT) and uses its links with King's College well to recruit new staff. Retention is secured through recognising staff strengths and areas for development through performance management and providing them with good opportunities for improvement.
85. Systems for financial management are well embedded. Funding is allocated on a largely historical basis, such that departments' development plans are not costed, nor is there complete clarity as to whether funding is to be made available to support individual planned developments at department level. The school harnesses a wide range of funding sources and uses them very effectively and imaginatively in supporting the range of strategies for raising achievement of identified groups. As a matter of principle, governors do not expect to carry forward significant balances from one year to another and so these are somewhat slim.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	5,798,758
Total expenditure	5,786,245
Expenditure per pupil	4,862

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	48,252
Balance carried forward to the next year	60,765

Sixth form

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- The strong sixth form team, led by an assistant headteacher, has clear vision and a shared determination to succeed.
- The management of student attendance records is unsatisfactory.
- Overall, management of the day-to-day running of the sixth form is good.
- Very good teamwork ensures that students are well supported.
- The leadership of subjects is strong.

COMMENTARY

86. The leadership of the sixth form is very good. There is a clear sense of purpose and a shared determination to pursue the development of courses and opportunities to suit the whole post-16 population of the school. Strategic planning is thorough and sets out a range of developments that will take the sixth form forward to the benefit of its students. Links with other schools and institutions are positive and geared to broadening the range of educational opportunities the school has to offer. The school's achievement of business and enterprise status has further enhanced the range of courses available. Very clear guidance ensures that sixth form leaders and tutors work well together to provide a climate where students are well supported and secure in their studies.
87. There is very good leadership in the subjects that offer post-16 courses. In business and in mathematics there is very good strategic planning and, in physics, the knowledgeable and innovative leadership of teaching and the curriculum focuses on raising standards. There is a strong commitment to equality of opportunity and to providing for individual needs.
88. The management of the sixth form is good. Very good routines are in place to monitor students' progress and to ensure that they remain on track to achieve their potential. The work of the sixth form is periodically reviewed and governors are kept informed of developments. The arrangements, however, for monitoring students' absences and for ensuring that they arrive on time for lessons are unsatisfactory and need to be reviewed as a matter of priority.
89. Sixth form courses are well managed by committed staff who want the best for their students. There is good analysis of student performance and action taken to drive up standards. Teachers are well supported and their work is periodically monitored. There is a good team of well-qualified staff, although some recruitment difficulties have been experienced in business.

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**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards seen	Average	Average
Achievement	Good	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Good	Satisfactory
Leadership	Good	
Management	Good	
Improvement since last inspection	Good	

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- The steady improvement in standards in tests at the end of Year 9 and GCSE results over a three-year period.
- The overall good achievement of pupils in English throughout the school.
- The good progress of pupils with special educational needs and gifted and talented pupils.
- The good relationships and mutual harmony between pupils.
- Good enrichment opportunities provided through the English department.
- Good leadership and management.
- Insufficient challenge in some mixed ability groups for above average pupils, particularly in Years 10 and 11.
- Learning is impeded when the lesson pace and structure does not always make the most of the 90 minute lesson time.
- In some lessons there is insufficient involvement of pupils and the teacher tends to over dominate.

COMMENTARY

90. There has been a steady improvement in English test results for Year 9 pupils over a three-year period. The most recent 2004 results were close to national averages and there has been a significant improvement in the number of higher grades. Similarly, GCSE English results have shown a steady improvement over a three-year period, though there are still fewer of the higher A to C grades than the national average. The most recent English literature GCSE results are significantly improved and are now close to the national average.
91. By the end of Year 9, pupils` standards are close to average. For instance, in a Year 9 lesson, pupils paid close attention to a reading of the short story `Vendetta` and made key points drawing on evidence and explanation. Below average and average pupils achieve well, although less progress is made in these mixed ability lessons by the above average pupils. These above average pupils, however, are well supported in Years 7 to 9 by their `booster` lessons and achieve well in these. Pupils make particularly good

progress in speaking and listening skills and reading. Good use was made of National Poetry Day and pupils responded well to the chosen poems.

92. By the end of Year 11, standards of work seen are close to the national average. Below average and average pupils achieve well, although less progress is made by some above average pupils who need to be challenged further by extended discussion and writing. An example of good achievement from all pupils was a Year 11 reading and discussion of `An Inspector Calls`. Above average pupils made good progress, challenged by searching open-ended questioning and they are beginning to explore and understand how the characters' development is linked to the structure of the play. Other pupils achieve well and all can write Eric's story with varying degrees of understanding and depth.
93. Teaching and learning are good overall in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory overall in Years 10 and 11. Where teaching is good, predominately in Years 7-9, there is good planning for the lesson length and there is a sufficient variety of activities involving the pupils throughout. There is good support for those pupils with special needs in lessons and in `booster` additional classes. Gifted and talented pupils also receive similar support in `booster` lessons and respond well to this. Where lessons are only satisfactory, predominately in Years 10 and 11, there is insufficient challenge for the most able pupils and insufficient opportunities for them to extend their ideas. In some of the 90-minute lessons, there is insufficient variety and pace to keep pupils engaged and learning throughout. In all years, pupils benefit from knowledgeable and enthusiastic teachers and are well supported by teaching assistants. Teaching in media studies makes a good contribution to the learning of pupils who take this course in Years 10 and 11.
94. The department is well led and staff work well as a team to support each other. There are clear priorities in the department with an emphasis on strategies that will raise the standards and achievement of pupils. Improvement since the last inspection has been good, with steadily improving standards.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

95. The standards of literacy in the school are good. There is a literacy strategy in place, which sets out principles and strategies to move all students forward. The focus is on improving literacy for Years 7 and 8 pupils, in particular on raising pupils' reading ages, on writing appropriately and on learning vocabulary specific to each subject area. Most subjects have a focus on language through encouraging discussion, through opportunities for extended writing and the use of key technical words. Pupils are good at speaking and listening skills and levels of reading and writing are improving.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Provision in modern foreign languages is **good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards seen	Average	Average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good
Leadership	Good	
Management	Good	

Improvement since last inspection	Good
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MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Teaching is good.
- The faculty is well led and managed and teachers work well as a team.
- Good use is made of ICT to support learning.
- There is a good range of enrichment activities available to pupils.
- In some lessons, pupils do not have sufficient opportunity in class to speak the language.
- Results at GCSE level are below average.

COMMENTARY

96. The proportion of pupils who attained grades A* to C in French in 2003 was well below the national average. More boys than girls were entered and their performance was close to the national average for boys, and close to the standards they reached in other subjects. In 2004, there was a slight increase in the proportion of pupils attaining the higher grades, although one-third of those entered were at grade E.
97. In Spanish, results in 2003 were in line with the national average and girls' performance exceeded it. Pupils did better in Spanish relative to their other subjects than is the case nationally. In 2004, results in Spanish were well below those of the previous year.
98. By Year 9, pupils are developing appropriate levels of understanding of Spanish and French in both spoken and written form. Those who started to learn a second language in Year 8 are reaching above-average levels of language knowledge and understanding. Standards in speaking are the least well developed, especially where there is insufficient insistence on oral practice during the lesson. By Year 11, standards are around the average in most aspects of the work, although speaking remains weaker than the other skills. Some good examples of pupils' writing were seen.
99. Pupils' achievement relative to their capabilities is, in the main, good throughout the school. They respond well to challenging and lively activities and most pupils make good progress. There is little difference between the achievement of boys and girls, although the casual attitudes of some older boys restrict the amount of progress they can make.
100. Teaching is good at all levels. The school is fortunate in having a team of well-qualified linguists who plan their lessons well, taking care to ensure that there is work well matched to all levels of attainment in the group. Teachers provide a carefully structured range of activities in their lessons and pupils in the main respond well. At times expectations could be higher, particularly in terms of demands on pupils to make active use of the language they are learning; oral work is sometimes not central enough to the work covered in the lesson. The marking and assessment of pupils' work varies across the teachers in the faculty: in some cases marking is extremely detailed and very helpful and in others it is no more than satisfactory.
101. The faculty provides a very good range of enrichment activities for the pupils, from visits to France and Spain, to booster classes and language clubs.
102. The faculty is well led. There is good vision and a shared determination to drive up standards. The teachers work together well as a team. Management is good; the faculty analyses its performance thoroughly and takes action to improve where there are weaknesses. Monitoring of teaching takes place and there is good professional sharing of good ideas and strategies to improve teaching. As a result, improvement since the last inspection has been good.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards seen	Average	Below average

Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Leadership	Good	
Management	Good	
Improvement since last inspection	Good	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards by the end of Year 9 are improving and are now close to the national average.
- Standards by the end of Year 11 are still below average.
- The achievement of the majority of pupils is satisfactory overall.
- The quality of teaching and learning is variable and ranges from very good to unsatisfactory.
- Strong curriculum leadership is contributing to the rise in standards in Years 7-9.

COMMENTARY

103. Standards in National Curriculum tests by the end of Year 9 in 2003 are well below average when compared with all schools nationally. Unvalidated results in 2004 show a higher proportion of pupils gaining the nationally expected levels and taking this into account the improvement in results over the last five years is faster than the national trend. In GCSE examinations in 2003, standards are well below the national average for pupils gaining A*-C grades but above average for the proportion of pupils gaining A*-G grades.
104. The standards of work for the current groups in Years 7 – 9 and in Year 10 are consistent with the latest test results and are now close to the national average. Standards have improved because of changes in teaching influenced by the national strategy and improved assessment procedures. Standards in Year 11 are higher than the most recent GCSE results but are below average. This improvement is likely to be due to the better teaching experienced by most pupils during Years 7-10. However, a minority do not achieve expected levels because they are not well challenged by the approach to learning with emphasis on individual work that takes place before they reach Year 11.. The achievement of the majority of pupils is satisfactory by the time they reach Year 9 and Year 11 and they are attaining expected levels in relation to earlier attainment. Pupils with SEN achieve well when they are supported in lessons. Indian heritage pupils also achieve well.
105. A distinctive feature of teaching and learning in mixed ability classes in Years 7–9 and in Year 10 is the use of individual work programmes. This is based on work cards and other resources which are matched to pupils' National Curriculum levels. Teaching and learning are good in a minority of such lessons because pupils are effectively encouraged to work independently and collaboratively. Teachers relate well to pupils and through the individual attention they give, challenge them to think about their work, which leads to good understanding and achievement. However, most lessons are not of this quality, although they are mainly satisfactory. At worst, in lessons where teaching and learning are unsatisfactory, the repetitive use of work cards for the main lesson activity fails to challenge pupils or stimulate interest. Consequently, pupils make limited progress during the lesson and underachieve. The inability of a minority of teachers to effectively manage behaviour is also a significant factor that adversely affects learning and results in underachievement. When this takes place, pupils who want to learn, including higher attaining pupils, are distracted. Pupils in Year 11 are taught in ability groupings matched to the expected tier of GCSE examination entry. Teaching and learning in a Year 11 group of higher attainers is very good because of interesting delivery, aided by good use of interactive whiteboards, very good pace and very good balance of explanation and challenge.

106. Generally, assessment procedures are well used by teachers who keep and update careful records on each pupil, recording National Curriculum levels and grades. Although pupils' work is regularly marked and feedback is given on the overall quality, not enough advice is given to pupils on how to improve.
107. The head of department provides strong leadership which is committed to raising standards. She works well with a team of teachers that has a relatively high proportion of inexperienced staff for whom she provides very good professional support. There are good procedures in place to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. Improvement since the last inspection is good with almost twice the percentage of pupils reaching the nationally expected level.

Mathematics across the curriculum

108. Pupils' competence in mathematics is close to average, and is sufficiently well developed to enable them to cope with learning in other subjects. They are able to transfer mathematical skills effectively to other areas of the curriculum. A good example of this is seen in geography lessons where pupils are comfortable with number in carrying out calculations and are able to represent data and present it in a variety of forms.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards seen	Average	Average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good
Leadership	Very good	
Management	Very good	
Improvement since last inspection	Good	

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Leadership and management of the faculty are significant to most pupils achieving well.
- Teachers work hard and well as a team that has a desire to raise standards and a capacity to succeed.
- Teaching and learning are generally good, although teaching strategies do not place enough emphasis on the impact of shared learning objectives, key words, starter activities and plenary sessions.
- Pupils are not often challenged to make predictions, to design and to form hypotheses and teachers' questions are not directed by name to keep all pupils on task.

COMMENTARY

109. The Year 9 results in the 2003 National Curriculum tests were close to the national average for both the expected Level 5 and the higher Level 6, when compared with those in all schools. The results were well above average when compared with those of schools with pupils who have similar prior attainment and almost meet challenging targets set for science. Results for the GCSE dual award examination were below average for pupils gaining A*-C grades, average for C grades and above average for pupils gaining A*-G grades, when compared with results in all schools. In their GCSE examinations, pupils do

less well in science than they do in their other subjects but their achievements are good and represent very good added value since arriving at the school in Year 7. The unconfirmed 2004 results for science continue the year on year improvement in results since the last inspection with boys, girls and all pupils within minority ethnic groups now attaining similar results.

110. The standards of work seen reflect well the improving test and examination results over recent years. In most lessons pupils achieve well. They respond well to being challenged. Most pupils are keeping a good record of their work and handle apparatus safely whilst making accurate observations. They use their text books well to support their independent learning. Higher attaining pupils bring very good prior knowledge to new situations and complete extension exercises well. They are not well practised at design, making predictions and forming hypotheses. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well in response to the good support they get from their teachers and teaching assistants, despite there being insufficient joint pre-planning by these parties. They are uncertain when practising number and some leave work unfinished. Overall, very positive attitudes to work and good behaviour by most, are helping pupils' achievements, as are their good levels of literacy, numeracy and ICT.
111. In a very good lesson on acids and alkalis in Year 7, planning took into account pupils' primary school knowledge, then provided a wealth of challenging activities that pupils so enjoyed that they spontaneously applauded each others' contributions during the plenary session. During a very good lesson on chemical change in Year 11, the teacher made very good use of the interactive whiteboard to keep pupils focused on to the learning objectives and to secure very good progress at a very good pace. In both of these lessons the department teaching and learning policy was employed to great effect. All teachers set and mark homework regularly, but marking does not set short-term targets. Some very good assessment data is shared well with pupils but, as yet, pupils are not skilled at self-evaluation.
112. Leadership is very good, providing a strong sense and evidence of a very well motivated and effective team. Strategic planning promotes both faculty and whole school visions for the future. There is rigorous self-evaluation of the work of the faculty and monitoring of performance data that triggers appropriate action. Very good monitoring of teaching and learning supports a commitment to professional development, but has not yet secured consistent practice across the faculty.
113. The faculty has addressed the issues raised at the last inspection and has made a big commitment to improving teaching and learning, both to good effect.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards seen	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good
Leadership	Good	
Management	Good	
Improvement since last inspection	Good	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Action taken to improve pupils' reasoning and to meet the needs of the GCSE course has raised standards.
- Good teaching encourages pupils to think about their work.
- Shortage of accommodation makes use of ICT in other subjects patchy.
- The arrangement of classrooms detracts from the learning atmosphere in two rooms.

COMMENTARY

114. Results in the GCSE examination were well below average in 2004 and well below those of the same students in other subjects.
115. By the end of Year 9, pupils work below expected levels. Those seen designing flow charts to simulate the movement of a fairground ride understand the principles and can apply them with some help. Their achievement is good in relation to their previous performance. Higher attaining pupils who had no ICT lessons in Year 8 are still catching up and so their achievement is less good. Pupils now show that they are thinking about the application of techniques to specific purposes, whereas in the past they concentrated on designing to please themselves. By Year 11, pupils are presently working below appropriate levels because they are catching up with work that would normally have been covered earlier in the course.
116. They now have expected levels of understanding of the issues involved in designing relational database, although they have weak understanding of the attributes of different field types. Students achieve well in that they have raised the standard of their work considerably during the past year. Most girls work carefully and thoughtfully, while boys show greater flair, but do so to please themselves rather than to meet the requirements. The highest attainers in class are often black Caribbean boys. Students with special educational needs achieve very well.
117. Teaching is good throughout the department. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use the KS3 Strategy well to plan the development of thinking. They give very good support to individuals, targeting those who will be most in need of help or challenge. In the 45 minute lesson, teachers often run out of time for recapitulation at the end of the lesson, so that the learning is not reinforced. Written assessment has only just begun and is not yet being used effectively by all staff. In some classes, behaviour management is not strong enough to engage the interest of pupils, resulting in some disruptive behaviour that slows the pace of learning. This is made worse in two classrooms with no wall between them so that loud work in one disturbs pupils in the other.
118. The department is well led. The head of department has identified issues and is acting to improve them. Management is good with good communication and effective sharing of resources. There is good technical support to maintain the network. Improvement since the last inspection is good in that the department has changed focus from learning to applying processes, thus raising standards.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

119. ICT across the curriculum is unsatisfactory. Only one classroom is available for cross-curricular booking because of heavy use of accommodation for business and ICT

lessons. This room is used well by modern foreign languages but other subjects, especially humanities, find it difficult to book. In design and technology, pupils use computers in the department to learn to control events, while they use data logging equipment well in science. Mathematics teachers make good use of interactive whiteboards for whole-class teaching. Physical education teachers use video well to analyse pupils' performance. Elsewhere there is not enough specialist equipment, especially in art and music. Nevertheless, when pupils are able to use computers they do so competently.

HUMANITIES

GEOGRAPHY

Provision in geography is **good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards seen	Average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good
Leadership	Good	
Management	Good	
Improvement since last inspection	Good	

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Pupils achieve standards higher than expected from their prior attainment.
- Teachers know pupils well and set high expectations for them.
- Very good leadership has established a team of staff who work well together to develop learning activities that engage pupils and motivate them to learn.
- Assessments are thorough and show pupils how to improve their work.
- There are too few ICT facilities available in lessons to promote learning.

COMMENTARY

120. In 2003, results in the GCSE humanities examination, of which geography forms a significant part alongside history and religious education, were above average. There was no significant difference in the results of boys and girls or of pupils from the very wide range of ethnic backgrounds in the school. Most pupils did better in GCSE humanities than in their other subjects and achieved well in relation to their test results at the end of Year 9. In recent years, results have improved and this trend has continued into the 2004 results.

121. Standards in geography are below average when pupils enter the school. In Years 7 to 9, geographical themes are taught together with historical and religious studies in a combined humanities course. Because the course is so carefully planned and continuously monitored, pupils' good progress in geography is ensured and they are achieving well. By the end of Year 9, standards of work seen are broadly average. Most pupils have a good sense of place and are able to empathise well with the problems faced by people in developing countries. Although many pupils make good use of appropriate terms when describing geographic processes, lower attaining pupils often use the vernacular. In Years 10 and 11, standards of work are above average and

achievement overall is good. Most pupils have a good knowledge of locations, patterns and geographical events but there is limited access to ICT in lessons to support independent learning. Some lower attaining pupils often have difficulty understanding written questions so they cannot use their knowledge accurately.

122. In all years, boys and girls and pupils from the diverse range of ethnic backgrounds in the school achieve equally well. However, those pupils with a special educational need do not always make as fast gains in knowledge and understanding because of the patchiness of classroom support for these pupils.
123. Teaching and learning are good. Most lessons are lively and well planned, with learning objectives usually adapted for different groups of pupils so that their needs are met. Interesting and varied methods, practical exercises, together with stimulating displays of work in teaching rooms, all increase pupils' enthusiasm for the subject. Teachers assess pupils' work thoroughly and set clear targets for them. Pupils therefore understand how to improve and reach higher levels. Although most pupils enjoy their lessons, occasional disruptive behaviour distracts the whole class and reduces learning. Pupils gain confidence in speaking and listening, for example on aspects of global warming, when group work is carefully structured. However, in the less effective lessons, pupils are not always sufficiently challenged to achieve their best and they sometimes spend too much time, in long lessons, on low level tasks such as copying and labelling diagrams. In a small minority of lessons, teachers' insecure subject knowledge prevents higher attaining pupils from making greater progress.
124. The subject is well led and managed within the humanities faculty. There is a clear vision and determination for improving standards, and appropriate systems are in place to make this happen. The quality of teaching and learning is effectively monitored in a mutually supportive way and new teachers to the school are given very effective help. A sharper focus is needed, within the curriculum in Years 7 to 9, on further supporting non-specialist teachers and on using ICT to improve learning as a means to further improvement in pupils' achievement. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

HISTORY

Provision in history is **good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards seen	Average	Average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good
Leadership	Good	
Management	Good	
Improvement since last inspection	Good	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well throughout the school because of good teaching.
- Standards are improving from a low start to national averages at the end of Year 9.
- Good leadership and management are effective in improving teaching and learning and raising achievement.
- Opportunities for regular teaching of history using information and communication technology are limited.
- In 90-minute lessons, a minority of pupils lose concentration and cause low level disruption.

Commentary

125. In 2003, results in the GCSE humanities examination, of which history forms a significant part alongside geography and religious education, were above average. There was no significant difference in the results of boys and girls or of pupils from the very wide range of ethnic backgrounds in the school. Most pupils did better in GCSE humanities than in their other subjects and achieved well in relation to their test results at the end of Year 9. In recent years, results have improved and this trend has continued into the 2004 results.
126. By the end of Year 9, pupils' historical skills are average. In work seen and lessons observed, pupils demonstrate a sound sense of chronology and empathy with historical figures. The more able and especially girls, write a good draft article about 'Explosion on the Regent's Canal' in the last century using complex sentences. By Year 11, most pupils, including those with special needs and who have English as an additional language, build well on their previous knowledge and understanding. In lessons seen, they interpreted and evaluated bias in sources about the Cuban Crisis in 1962, extracted and used information to identify reasons and explained events well.
127. Teaching and learning are good overall because teachers use their command of the subject, together with a variety of effective teaching styles, to enable students to acquire new historical knowledge and deepen their understanding. They closely link their planning to the scheme of work. They have high expectations both of behaviour and standards of work but, in the longer lessons, a minority of pupils lose concentration and are disruptive. There are fewer opportunities for direct teaching of history and information and communication technology, to build students' skills further. Nevertheless, pupils demonstrate good attitudes to learning; they collaborate well and contribute actively to their own learning and their progress is good as a result.

128. Leadership and management are both good. The subject leader is enthusiastic and history is now taught as a discrete subject for GCSE as well as the wider humanities option. There is good teamwork providing good role models for pupils. There are good displays in the humanities area of pupils' work and to celebrate the Black History Month. History continues to be a strength in the school since the last inspection and there has been good improvement. The scheme of work is balanced and relevant and provides a good framework for helping development of historical skills. The department is conscious that the continuing lack of higher grades is due to pupils' independent and extended writing being less developed, and this is beginning to be addressed. The National Key Stage 3 Strategy is having an impact and targets for individual pupils are improving for meeting their specific needs.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards seen	Average	Above average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Good
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Good
Leadership	Satisfactory	
Management	Good	
Improvement since last inspection	Satisfactory	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good performance in the GCSE humanities examination.
- The school's commitment to the importance of the subject is good.
- Lack of a match to the agreed syllabus assessment lowers expectations.
- Variety of teaching methods results in positive attitudes.
- Some lessons are over-dominated by teachers' direction at the expense of pupils' contribution, limiting achievement in Years 7-9.
- Lack of enrichment through more use of community and Internet resources.

Commentary

129. In 2003, results in the GCSE humanities examination, of which religious education forms a significant part alongside geography and history, were above average. There was no significant difference in the results of boys and girls or of pupils from the very wide range of ethnic backgrounds in the school. Most pupils did better in GCSE humanities than in their other subjects and achieved well in relation to their test results at the end of Year 9. In recent years, results have improved and this trend has continued into the 2004 results.

130. By the end of Year 9, pupils' skills of describing and discussing the influence of beliefs and values and linking these to religions today, are average. Their awareness of how texts and teachings are interpreted by different groups and individuals within religions and how these can change and be challenged, are not developed. By the end of Year 11, standards are above average as pupils compare and contrast the beliefs and practices of Christians and Muslims.

131. In Years 7 to 9, pupils are actively engaged in a variety of activities. Planning is not matched well to the agreed syllabus. As a result, teacher expectations are sometimes too low and pupils do not develop the higher-level subject skills of thinking, speaking and argument which they need in order to improve. Pupils learn useful information to explain religious actions but do not collect and comment on enough first-hand evidence of religions today. There is insufficient attention to broadening pupil knowledge of all the main living religions. In Years 10 and 11, learning is good when pupils apply their knowledge and understanding with critical skills and explore religious concepts, sources and interpretations. Pupils analyse what religions believe but do not ask questions in order to evaluate, for themselves, views arising from differing interpretations of the same beliefs.

132. The subject is managed well, with a commitment to parity between humanities subjects. There has been satisfactory progress since the previous inspection, but the lack of specialist staff restricts the effectiveness of planning and teaching in terms of the local agreed syllabus.

SOCIOLOGY

Provision in sociology is **very good**.

	Year 11
Standards seen	Well above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good
Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Improvement since previous inspection	Very good

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Standards are rising rapidly and are above the national average; pupils achieve very well.
- Teaching is very good and enables pupils to make very clear gains in their knowledge and understanding.
- The quality of leadership is very good and provides a clear vision.
- Pupils enjoy their lessons and clearly feel valued.
- ICT is underused as a means of increasing pupils' levels of confidence and independence.

COMMENTARY

133. In 2003, results in the GCSE sociology examination were below average and there was no significant difference in the results of boys and girls, or of pupils from the very wide range of ethnic backgrounds in the school. Most pupils did as well as in their other subjects and achieved satisfactorily in relation to their test results at the end of Year 9. However, in 2004, results improved significantly, a reflection of the higher standards of the pupils who opted for the subject.

134. Pupils begin their study of sociology in Year 10. The current Year 10 pupils have made a very good start to their course. Their progress to date is very good and they have already made clear and rapid gains in their knowledge and understanding. This rapid progress continues into Year 11 where pupils build well on what they learnt in Year 10. Standards

seen by the end of Year 11 are well above average. Pupils have a good grasp of the vocabulary of the subject and are able to use this well to describe sociological processes, for instance, social stratification. Achievement is very good for both boys and girls and also for pupils from the diverse range of ethnic backgrounds. Pupils are able to explain and identify bias and reliability in evidence and are able to plan investigations to research sociological themes. Coursework planning is thorough and pupils show a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the methodologies they are planning to use.

135. The teaching and learning of sociology is very good. Teachers use their expertise and secure subject knowledge to good effect, providing effective support and clear guidance to pupils. Lessons are challenging and well planned. Teachers make very good use of questioning to reinforce and clarify pupils' knowledge and understanding. Marking of pupils' work is thorough with very clear guidance on what has been done well and what needs to be done in order to improve. The teaching is very enthusiastic and good humoured; pupils react positively to this and show good levels of concentration and perseverance.
136. As a result of the very good teaching, pupils show enthusiasm for the subject. Sociology is an increasingly popular option with both boys and girls and it recruits the widest range of ability. Although less able pupils are somewhat lacking in confidence, teachers work hard to improve this and ensure that all pupils feel valued. There is scope, however, to develop more independence in pupils' learning, for instance through the greater use of ICT in the classroom.
137. Leadership is very good, with very clear vision and direction. Management is also very good; planning for improvement is strong. Teachers work very well together as a team and the subject leader monitors standards carefully, supporting new teachers very well. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

Overall the provision in design and technology is **satisfactory**.

	Years7-9	Year 10-11
Standards	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Leadership	Satisfactory	
Management	Satisfactory	
Progress since previous inspection	Unsatisfactory	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below the national expectations.
- Assessment and monitoring are well developed but students need to be aware and understand what they need to do to progress further.

- Students have insufficient access to information and communication across all material areas of technology.
- The achievement of students with special educational needs is well supported.

Commentary

138. Results in the GCSE examinations were below average. The results have fluctuated over the past three years. Textiles consistently achieve good results but resistant materials results are poor. Girls perform better than the boys.
139. The test results and current standards in Years 7-9 are below the national average. The analysis of pupils' work, observations and talking to pupils indicates that achievement is satisfactory overall, but that the standards are below the national expectation. Pupils make more progress from Year 7 to 8 especially in textiles and food. Year 9 pupils, mainly boys, lack concentration and commitment thus resulting in poor behaviour and restricted progress.
140. Achievement by Year 11 is satisfactory and the current standards in Years 10 and 11 are just in line with the national expectation. Over the past three years, standards of attainment have fluctuated with a slight improvement especially in A*-C grades. The coursework standards in Years 10 and 11 were satisfactory and the predicted grades reflected this. The reduced access to and use of, information and communication technology is impeding the learning and the presentation of GCSE coursework, especially in food technology. The progress of students with special educational needs is satisfactory, they are well supported and cope well along-side others. They would benefit from further specialist support during practical sessions.
141. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Lessons are adequately planned and organised with clear objectives. The teaching is more effective in Years 7 and 11 because good demonstrations and discussions raise pupils' skills and understanding. A real sense of purpose is seen in most lessons with good support for all. In a Year 8 systems and control lesson, the supply teacher's good subject knowledge, enthusiasm, humour and class management enabled students to understand technical vocabulary and make progress in learning about programming simple robots. Pupils' practical skills and use of equipment are generally good; however, there is a high dependency on the teacher for reassurance. Pupils need to be encouraged to be more independent learners. The teaching of related information technology is effective. The main weakness in the teaching occurs in resistant materials lessons, where the pace is slow, students are insufficiently challenged and there is inadequate classroom management. Resources used are well chosen to suit the tasks set and ensure that pupils have equal access. The teaching in many lessons in Years 9 and 10 has the potential to motivate and enthuse the pupils; however, pupils' apathy often prevents any positive impact on their learning. In Year 11, pupils make good use of the examination criteria and constructive marking. The art and design course is well supported by local industry. There was good recapitulation of previous work, supported by effective questioning and answer techniques, which aided the reinforcement of knowledge. All homework, when set, is relevant and used as part of the lessons.
142. The head of department provides satisfactory curriculum leadership and management of the department. A basic assessment programme is in place, but teachers do not always use levels of attainment to inform pupils how well they are doing and what they need to do

to improve. New staff need monitoring and further training in assessing technology. The department has developed some extremely good links with industry. A gifted and talented extra-curricular activity has been very successful in winning an award in a regeneration of the Harlesden project. The new facilities have created a good learning environment. Some areas still need modification, especially the textile technology room, as there is no dedicated suitable area for textile equipment such as sewing machines. There remains a problem with the ventilation system in the workshops and a need for ancillary help in food technology. Large groups in some of the smaller rooms restrict the scope of learning. There has been insufficient improvement since the last inspection.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

ART AND DESIGN

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

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards seen	Above average	Well above average
Achievement	Good	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good	Very good
Leadership	Very good	
Management	Very good	
Improvement since last inspection	Good	

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Very good specialist teaching enables pupils to achieve well in Years 7-9 and very well in Years 10/11.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to work are good in Years 7-9 and very good in Years 10/11.
- Very good assessment procedures and practices in Years 10/11 ensure pupils know how to improve.
- Very good leadership fosters effective teamwork and harmonious relationships.
- Teachers create a welcoming ethos, which helps all pupils to feel valued.
- There are insufficient computers in the department.
- Lack of technical support means that teachers have to spend too much time preparing materials.
- Pupils with EAL or SEN receive little additional support for the increasing requirements for written work in the subject.

Commentary

143. In 2003, the proportion who gained the higher grades A* to C in the GCSE examination was significantly below the national average. Results improved substantially in 2004 and, from data unvalidated at the time of the inspection, are better than the national average.
144. Standards seen in Year 9 are above national expectations. Given that many pupils enter Year 7 with a wide disparity of prior experience in practical or theoretical work, this shows good achievement. Teachers regularly teach practical skills, through demonstration and focused activities, consequently pupils develop confidence as well as competence in their drawings, paintings and sculpture. They effectively use a wide range of image-making techniques and media, including graded pencils, pigments and fabrics as well as modelling and construction materials. They use good levels of technical vocabulary when comparing their own work with that of established artists. They develop very good cultural understanding by analysing works by Picasso, Modigliani and Cezanne. They admire and try to emulate the skills associated with the imagery of fantasy, created by artists such as Dali, Magritte and de Chirico. Most pupils can identify the important movements associated with these artists, such as Impressionism and Surrealism. In addition to European art, they appreciate and use work by Aboriginal and native American and African artists as starting points for their own creative work. Pupils with SEN enjoy the subject and make similar good progress to their peers. The restricted provision of specialist support for their literacy or other special needs is a constraint, which is being managed within the subject. ICT in Years 7 to 9 is underdeveloped through lack of access to computers.
145. Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is very good and standards in Year 11 are well above average and have improved over those of the previous year group. Pupils make intelligent and creative use of sketchbooks for homework and in lessons. They organise ideas well and work with increasing independence. Many build successfully on earlier skills and are able to overlay complex layers of line, colour, shape and pattern, to achieve rich and exciting imagery. Some demonstrate increasing maturity by exploring contemporary issues surrounding morality and social responsibility, such as conflict in the community or care of the environment. This makes a very good contribution to their personal development. Pupils regularly write effective critical and reflective evaluations of their work and compare it with that of other artists. Pupils' well-crafted three-dimensional work in displays is of very high quality. They use digital photography well as a starting point for work on landscapes and portraiture. They also use computers appropriately, out of lessons, for homework, to research artists and cultures.
146. The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers plan exciting activities, which engage pupils' interest. They set firm ground rules for acceptable behaviour, which ensures pupils' attitudes and behaviour are positive. Teachers are very good role models. They have very good specialist subject knowledge and practical skills, which pupils recognise, respect and admire. Skills are taught on a step-by-step basis. This particularly supports lower-attaining pupils and develops confidence in those with SEN. Teachers give very good levels of verbal and written feedback, so that pupils know what they need to do to improve. Too much time is spent preparing materials because teachers have insufficient technical support. Lively displays and a welcoming ethos help pupils to feel supported and valued.

147. Subject leadership is very good and accounts for the many improvements since the last inspection. Teachers work effectively as a team. Relationships are very good, resulting in harmonious and industrious working practices. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. This is reflected in the policies, schemes of work and procedures for gathering assessment data, which are more detailed and better used by teachers to inform planning.

DRAMA

Provision in drama is **satisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards seen	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Leadership	Good	
Management	Good	
Improvement since last inspection	Satisfactory	

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- The enthusiasm and expertise of the recently appointed drama staff.
- The rich provision of extra-curricular drama activities.
- The gains in confidence from pupils` development of speaking and listening skills.
- Standards of work in recent GCSE exams have been unsatisfactory.
- Some unsatisfactory behaviour of pupils in Years 7-9.
- Pupils show insufficient knowledge of dramatic techniques.

COMMENTARY

148. Recent GCSE results were disappointing with the majority of pupils gaining only C and D grades, below the national average.
149. Pupils' achievement in drama is satisfactory in all years. By the end of Year 9, pupils' knowledge of dramatic techniques is below average. They know some of the basic dramatic techniques but fail to apply them in a lot of their improvisations. As a result, some of the work does not have an appropriate seriousness to it. All pupils do get involved in the drama activities and, as a result, they all develop in confidence in speaking and listening skills. In Years 10 and 11, pupils are beginning to develop the knowledge and skills for GCSE examinations, although at present standards are below average.
150. Throughout the school, pupils are benefiting from the knowledgeable and enthusiastic recently appointed new drama teachers. Lessons have clear objectives, are well planned and involve pupils in imaginative collaborative activities. However in Years 7-9, some pupils do not take their work seriously enough and there is some misbehaviour; there needs to be a clear emphasis on the parameters of acceptable behaviour in the drama room. An emphasis on the techniques of drama will also help pupils to understand how to improvise. There was some very good work observed with pupils with special needs in helping them to gain confidence and work with other pupils in groups.
151. The leadership, management and support of the assistant headteacher have been very good in supporting the work of the new drama staff. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. There is now a good vision for the future, good teamwork and expertise and a determination to improve standards and achievement for all pupils.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards seen	Average	Average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good
Leadership	Good	
Management	Good	
Improvement since last inspection	Good	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Because of good teaching pupils are keen to learn.
- Pupils from diverse cultures collaborate well together and feel valued.
- Since many pupils now choose music, regular access to ICT is limited.
- Provide more opportunities for gifted and talented pupils in lessons.
- Group work is hampered by the lack of space.

Commentary

152. The 2003 and 2004 teacher assessments for pupils aged 14 were well below average. The GCSE results for those aged 16 were very low in 2003 and, although they improved in 2004, they were still below average. There was no significant difference between the work of boys and girls.
153. The standards seen are broadly average in Years 9 and 11. Because many pupils enter Year 7 with underdeveloped musical skills, this represents good achievement throughout both key stages. Standards are rising because of the good quality of teaching. As pupils of all abilities and cultures work well together, this makes a good contribution towards their personal development. More pupils are interested in music; they choose to learn instruments and join musical groups such as the steel pans, jazz band and the choir. This builds up their self-esteem and complements the work done in lessons.
154. Because teaching in Years 7 to 9 is good overall, pupils are inspired to do well. The pace, challenge and management of pupils ensure that they are motivated and work hard. From Year 7, pupils develop skills and knowledge of rhythm work and samba and learn to play keyboard melodies using correct fingering. Due to a lack of space, few group improvisations take place. In Year 9, pupils are taught the notes of the common chords and many confidently play the keyboard using both hands. Because of their improved technique, pupils combine a walking bass with chords and riffs in performances of the blues. A few talented pupils are capable of more advanced work. There are occasional opportunities to use ICT facilities based in a nearby building.
155. Good teaching in Years 10 and 11 leads to a positive commitment from the pupils. The numbers have increased dramatically and, because of this, there is insufficient opportunity for regular composing using ICT. By emphasising the structure of variation form, Year 10 pupils have a better understanding of how to begin their own compositions. Year 11 pupils practise examination techniques to improve their skills at answering timed

questions that require a good musical knowledge. Apart from ICT, the department has good resources that are well used at breaks and after school.

156. Good leadership is raising the profile of music and many more pupils consider the subject a valid option choice. The strength of management is apparent in lessons and in the efficient running of the department. Because of this, there has been a good improvement since the previous inspection.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Stand Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Good	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Good	Good
Leadership	Good	
Management	Good	
Progress since previous inspection	Satisfactory	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The management of pupils is good and provides good opportunities for learning.
- Lesson planning is detailed and provides a good framework for teachers.
- Inclusion practices are very good and allow all pupils access to learning.
- There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own performance.
- The level of challenge is not always appropriate to the ability levels of the pupils.

Commentary

157. Results in the GCSE examinations were below average for both boys and girls. Pupils do better in the practical aspects of the examinations than they do in theory work.
158. Standards on entry at Year 7 are below the national average for both boys and girls. By Year 9, standards are in line with expectations in games and gymnastics representing good achievement. In Year 11 core National Curriculum lessons, the more able pupils show above average ability in games and the less able, including those with special educational needs, are making satisfactory progress. Standards overall are average and achievement satisfactory. In the theoretical part of the GCSE course, standards are below average as the weak literacy skills of pupils are a limiting factor in their ability to understand and use the technical terminology required at this level. In practical aspects of the course, standards are average and overall achievement is therefore satisfactory.
159. Lesson planning is very detailed and provides a good framework for the effective delivery of objectives, which are clearly outlined. Teachers manage the pupils well so that behaviour in lessons is often good and opportunities for learning are therefore maximised as pupils can focus on their work. In lessons where teaching is most effective, pupils are involved in their learning when provided with opportunities to evaluate their work. Although there are good examples of this, it is not routinely carried out in all lessons and pupils are not aware of the levels at which they are working and what they

must do to improve. In Years 7 to 9, the level of challenge is not always appropriate to the abilities of the pupils and results in loss of focus and commitment.

160. The commitment of the subject's leadership to the pupils is very good and is instrumental in providing the extra-curricular opportunities available to all levels of ability. Planning, schemes of work and health and safety issues are all in place and there are good inclusion practices consistently present in all lessons. The majority of teachers within the department have other responsibilities within the school and therefore make a part-time contribution to the teaching of the subject. Bearing this staffing situation in mind, improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

Provision in business studies is **satisfactory**.

	Year 11
Standards seen	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory
Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Improvement since last inspection	N/A

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Teachers have good relationships with students.
- Most students have good attitudes and behave well.
- ICT is not used enough as computers are not always readily available in lessons.
- Satisfactory links with local business and industry are being developed further.

COMMENTARY

161. GCSE business was introduced in 2002 and the first cohort of students entered the examination in 2004. Pupils gained GCSE examination grades that, in 2004, were slightly below national expectations, as half gained grades at C or above. Most pupils' achievement in business was satisfactory, but several performed better in the examination in relation to their attainment on entry to GCSE. The attainment of girls and boys were similar.
162. In lessons and coursework seen, standards of current pupils meet national expectations and girls and boys achieve satisfactorily overall. Year 10 pupils are beginning to understand differences between planned and market economies and most draw neat supply and demand curves to show equilibrium price. Year 11 pupils discuss good ideas for starting their own local businesses for GCSE coursework. They use ICT effectively to draw graphs of consumer surveys based on questionnaires. Pupils from different ethnic groups mix well. Pupils are well motivated by tasks connected with real businesses and show good attitudes overall. They lose concentration when tasks are not related to real businesses. The standards of some boys' written notes and homework in Year 10 were too low.
163. Teaching and learning are at least satisfactory, with several good features. In sampled lessons, teachers had good relationships with pupils and good subject expertise helped pupils, including those with special educational needs, to understand shifts in the demand curve. Homework is set fairly regularly but not enough tasks are given to higher-attaining pupils to develop their written evaluation skills. Pupils' work is not always marked consistently. Opportunities for developing literacy, particularly that of boys through using ICT, are limited due to insufficient computers being readily available in lessons which are held in several different, non-specialist, classrooms.
164. Leadership and management are good overall. In a short time, newly-appointed staff have begun effectively to revise previously inadequate schemes of work and plan to develop more links with local businesses as a result of the recent funds from the school's

business and enterprise specialist status. The subject, not inspected previously, has made a good start and has good capacity to develop further.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

CITIZENSHIP

Provision in citizenship is **satisfactory**. Much of this provision takes place within the personal, social, health and citizenship programme, which is of **good** quality and commented upon in paragraph 51.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards seen	Average	Average
Achievement	Good	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Good	Satisfactory
Leadership	Satisfactory	
Management	Satisfactory	
Improvement since last inspection	N/A	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good planning leads to units in subjects being recognised by pupils.
- School council and active projects give pupils citizenship opportunities.
- Lack of opportunities for all pupils to participate in citizenship activities.
- Statutory requirements to report separately are not met.

Commentary

165. Results in short course GCSE in 2004 for 21 pupils were well above average. There are currently no examination classes.
166. By the end of Year 9, pupils' understanding of global, European and national politics is average. Pupils demonstrate improved awareness of issues about the developing world and the different purposes of voluntary groups, involving both community-based and international charities. Good planning and use of stickers means units are recognised by pupils, helping to ensure that achievement is good. Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory. By the end of Year 11, most pupils' knowledge of the work of Parliament and the government is average, showing good understanding of the need for mutual respect and understanding of the diverse religious and ethnic groups in the United Kingdom.
167. In Years 7 to 9, teaching is good, making links clear between humanities subjects and citizenship topics. In religious education, pupils consider organisations which support prisoners of conscience who suffer for their beliefs, and which promote fair trade for cocoa farmers. In each year, pupils are involved in active citizenship projects. In Year 8, pupils' study of a charity involves them in an e-mail exchange with a village in Malawi. In Years 10 and 11, teaching is satisfactory. Pupils benefit from a well-planned teaching programme linked to personal and social education issues. Some pupils make regular visits to local primary schools to deliver lessons, but opportunities for all pupils to take part in citizenship activities are currently limited. The school council provides one opportunity for some pupils in each year to be voted as class and year representatives and to see democracy in action.
168. The subject is being reorganised and this is at a satisfactory stage, with satisfactory support for teachers to ensure consistent delivery of the required topics.

WORK RELATED LEARNING (WRL)

Provision of work related learning in the school is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has strong links with a number of business organisations.
- The school has its own database of employers for work experience.
- Several subject areas currently include work-related elements in their schemes of work. This needs to be extended across the curriculum.

Commentary

169. The quality of work related education is satisfactory overall and students achieve well in vocational subjects in Years 10 and 11. Work related learning is currently delivered through a combination of PSHE and vocational subject lessons. The contribution of work related elements to pupils' achievement is currently insufficient in most curriculum subjects, but it is good in Year 11 and post-16 AVCE art and design and design technology. The latter course demonstrates how well the work related learning aspect can be covered, through a community-based 'Cloths of Gold' project. This involved Year 8 pupils working with silk-screen artists, making banners for Kilburn festival. They were commissioned to produce a banner for the school hall. The pupils developed confidence and clearly learnt a tremendous amount about the world of work and working as a team. They made a good 'powerpoint' presentation of their work.
170. There is a good strategic overview of work related education and the school is implementing the new statutory requirements well. They have produced a comprehensive draft policy which is currently going through a full consultation process. An audit has identified the strengths and weaknesses across the curriculum. Several subject areas currently include work related aspects in their schemes of work; others are being encouraged to identify how they can also contribute. The school is currently developing schemes of work, a work experience booklet and a debriefing programme to enhance the delivery. The school is also well supported by the local industry and the Connexions service and has developed its own bank of employers for work experience.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

In the inspection, eight 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
Mathematics	7	71	62	29	17	27.1	22
Physics	3	100	69	33	14	40	23
Chemistry	4	75	73	0	14	27.5	24
Biology	6	83	65	17	11	31.7	21
History	10	100	81	30	20	36.0	29
Sociology	4	100	72	50	18	47.5	25
English	19	84	86	5	19	25.3	30
Media studies	10	90	N/A	10	N/A	26	N/A
Drama	6	100	87	0	20	33.3	31
French	3	100	78	0	19	30	28
Portuguese	1	100	N/A	N/A	N/A	40	N/A
Business studies	31	87	65	13	15	N/A	60
Art and design	N/A*	N/A	80	N/A	24	N/A	30

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
Mathematics	5	100	97	40	56	80	89
Physics	3	67	97	0	45	40	82
Chemistry	5	100	98	20	49	64	85
Communication studies	4	100	99	0	38	75	82
Drama	4	100	100	75	40	90	84
English literature	9	100	100	22	47	73	87
Geography	2	100	99	0	45	80	84
History	6	100	99	67	47	90	85
Sociology	6	100	98	50	44	83	84
Business studies	18	94	99	25	37	N/A	80

Level 2 vocational qualifications

Qualification	Number in final year	% gaining qualification		% gaining merit		% gaining distinction	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Business studies	28	61	N/A	14	N/A	N/A	N/A

*N/A – data not available.

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

English was the focus for the inspection. In lessons, teaching was good and the students achieve well relative to their attainment on entry. The subject is well led and managed. Two

lessons in **Spanish** were sampled. In each case, the teaching was good, lessons had high levels of challenge, and students' achievement was good. **Media studies** was also sampled.

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Current standards	Average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and learning	Good
Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Improvement since previous inspection	Good

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Students achieve well in sixth form English because of the consistently good teaching.
- Students benefit from the knowledgeable teachers.
- Students' attitudes and application to work are good.
- Attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory.

COMMENTARY

171. Recent results in the A and AS level examinations were below the national average. The number of higher grades in A-level examinations was below average, although all students entered did achieve a grade.
172. By the end of Year 13, students' achievements are good. For instance they clearly understand how the imagery of the sea in 'Othello' reflects the tempestuous relationship between the characters. They are able to articulate this through the different registers of language used by Cassio, Othello and Iago.
173. Students benefit from teachers with a good knowledge of their subject and who structure lessons well with a good variety of activities to keep students involved. Teachers use questioning and group activities well to challenge students and there is a high degree of interaction between students and the teachers in lessons. Students' attitudes to the subject are good and they work well independently and in groups. Marking, assessment and support for students are good. There are plenty of opportunities for students to participate in extra-curricular provision.
174. English in the sixth form is led and managed well. The clear vision and the emphasis on supporting students in order to raise standards reflects the improvement since the last inspection which has been good.

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

175. Standards of literacy in the sixth form are good. Levels of speaking and listening are high in most subjects, with good opportunities for extended writing. Levels of reading are good.

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

Mathematics, biology and physics were the focus of the inspection. Attainment in mathematics was in line with the national average in 2003, but results improved on this

performance in 2004 and achievement was very good. There were insufficient entries in 2003 to compare performance in biology and physics with other schools. In 2004, students achieved less well in biology than in physics, where achievement was good.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Standards seen	Above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good
Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Improvement since previous inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve very well by Year 13 because they are challenged by very good teaching and have very good attitudes to the subject.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- Students do not use enough ICT to support their learning.

Commentary

176. The last year for which comparative data is available was 2003 when attainment in GCE A-level in mathematics was in line with the national average. In 2004, A2 results improved and of the five candidates entered, two obtained A grades, two gained B grades and one a C grade. Following AS examinations at the end of Year 12 in 2004, three out of these five students obtained A or B grades.
177. Standards of work in both Years 12 and 13 are consistent with course expectations and recent examination results. Students in Year 12 are coping well with the demands of their course and the majority of students are making very good progress. By the time students reach Year 13, their achievement is very good when compared with GCSE results. They have very good algebra and thinking skills, which they are able to use effectively to solve problems in a systematic way.
178. In lessons the level of challenge is high and students are required to think systematically and give high quality explanations during class discussion. In doing this, they use mathematical language well, demonstrating good understanding of underlying principles. The very good balance of challenge and explanation, together with very good student attitudes, leads to very good achievement. Effective use of interactive whiteboards by teachers was seen in lessons to stimulate discussion and improve understanding of equations and their curves. Although this is taking place, students do not themselves use ICT enough to support their own learning. Homework is used to reinforce and extend learning and includes some independent research. Students respond well to the enthusiasm shown by their teachers and enjoy the challenge of mathematics lessons.
179. The sixth form is taught by a small team of teachers who are very committed. The head of department provides very good leadership and is a very positive role model for students and teachers. Sixth form provision is very well planned and the programme of modules is designed to maximise student performance with a strong emphasis on pure mathematics early in the Year 12 course. This reflects the generally good improvement since the last inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

180. Students' mathematical skills enable them to cope well in the majority of subjects. In art, pupils effectively transfer spatial awareness skills to produce high quality representations of naturally occurring geometric shapes. However, in a Year 12 business class on financial evaluation, weaker students did not demonstrate a good understanding of ratio.

SCIENCE

Biology

Provision in biology is **good**.

Current standards	Above average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and learning	Good
Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Improvement since previous inspection	Very good

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Standards are improving and are above the national average, particularly at A2 level.
- Teaching is good and enables students to make very clear gains in their knowledge and understanding.
- The quality of leadership is very good and provides a clear vision.
- Students enjoy their lessons and clearly feel valued.
- Some students lack confidence in their work.

Commentary

181. Although the 2003 A2 examination results were below the national averages for A and B grades, in 2004 all students got at least a D grade and the number who gained the highest grades was above average.

182. Standards are improving quickly and those observed during the inspection in Year 13 were above average overall. Girls are attaining higher standards than the boys but both groups are achieving equally well in relation to their standards when they entered the sixth form. Year 12 students have made a good start to their course. Their achievement is good and many begin their AS studies with modest prior attainment at GCSE. However, not all gain as deep an understanding of biological basics as they could and a few struggle with even simple specialist vocabulary. Year 13 students build well on what they learnt in Year 12. Their coursework planning is very thorough and students show a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the methodologies they are planning to use.

183. The teaching and learning in biology is good. Teachers have a deep knowledge of and love for their subject, which encourages the students, particularly in Year 13, to work at their own learning in a focused way. Teachers plan their lessons with great care and, in particular, draw on a wide range of methods and resources. As result, lessons are fast moving, keeping the students on their toes. The careful use of homework tasks reinforces

the students' learning. Marking of students' work is thorough, with very clear guidance on what has been done well and what needs to be done in order to improve. As a result of the teaching, students show enthusiasm for the subject. Biology is an increasingly popular option in the sixth form and it recruits the widest range of ability. Less able students often lack confidence but teachers work hard to improve this and ensure that all students feel valued.

184. Leadership is very good, with very clear vision and direction provided by the head of the science faculty. Management is also very good; planning for improvement is strong. There has been very good improvement since the previous inspection.

Physics

Provision in physics is **good**.

Standards seen	Above average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and learning	Good
Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Improvement since previous inspection	Good

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Teacher's knowledge of physics and effective planning to meet their individual needs, enables students to make good progress and to achieve well relative to their prior attainments.
- Very good relationships and very positive student attitudes to learning are significant to their achievements and to improving standards.

COMMENTARY

185. Results in the A2 examinations in 2003 were very low but AS results were above average when compared with the results for all students in maintained schools. At A2, student targets are not being met. Unconfirmed 2004 results have doubled students' average points score and continue the year-on-year improvement over recent years.
186. The standards of work seen reflect the improved examination results. Most students in Year 12 are achieving the higher expectations of the AS course at levels appropriate to their prior attainments. Higher attaining students design and carry out investigations accurately. They bring a good level of prior knowledge and understanding to lessons, ask challenging questions and discuss their work well. Lower attaining students find the work challenging. They lack confidence and find the associated mathematics difficult. There is a similar picture in Year 13, where numbers are much smaller. In both years, female students are a minority overall but are well represented in the higher attaining group. All students are generally well focused and are keen to do well. They work well together and support each other well. They are confident that they will achieve their ambitions at the school.
187. Teachers set high standards that are significant to students achieving well. They are well qualified and plan well, making good use of resources for effective learning. They have high expectations and support their students very well, sharing assessment data with them so that they know how well they are doing. Students acknowledge the level of individual attention they receive in lessons and in support of their independent learning. They are well challenged but teachers do not use questioning effectively when students are off task.
188. Leadership and management are both very good. There is a clear vision focused upon raising standards and a total commitment to local consortium arrangements that bring students from other schools to study physics at both AS and A2 levels. The arrangements are working very well and the increase in the number of students is such that extra resourcing of the subject will be required. Included in this is a need to increase the

number of physics specific contacts beyond the school to further enrich the curriculum. With an increasing number of students taking physics, new laboratories and improving results, improvement since the last report is good.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The vocational course in **information and communication technology (ICT)** was the focus of the inspection, but wider applications of information and communication technology were also investigated. Key Skills ICT at both Level 2 and Level 3 form part of the sixth form enrichment programme. One lesson was seen in which teaching and learning were both good, resulting in appropriate levels of performance in relation to students' previous experience.

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

Current standards	Below average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and learning	Good
Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Improvement since previous inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The knowledge of subject teachers is good: they give reliable guidance to students.
- Action taken in the last year has improved standards.
- Students' unsatisfactory attendance and punctuality has a negative impact on progress.
- The curriculum meets the needs of the students.
- The business links form real contexts that help students to learn.

Commentary

189. This is the first time that Year 13 students are following the AVCE course in information and communication technology (ICT). Students' well below average attainment in Year 12 AVCE examinations forms a weak basis for completion of the course.
190. Standards in the sixth form are below average in Year 13 and also on entry to the sixth form. However, students seen during the inspection work just below the levels expected for the course and show good improvement over their previous work. Higher attaining Year 13 students, building web sites for real clients, now have enough knowledge of the software to be able to identify solutions to problems, while the majority have good awareness of the client's requirements. Their recent achievement is good overall and is very good for students with special educational needs. Year 12 students have made a good beginning to the course, working above the levels expected from their GCSE results. The highest achievers are girls in both year groups, as they concentrate well on learning and applying new skills. Some Year 12 students, mostly boys, are distracted from the main issues to be learned and applied, by presentation decisions.
191. The recent improvement in standards is the result of good teaching. The department is now staffed by specialists who teach mainly ICT. They provide a wide range of opportunities for students, with particularly good web design application in Year 13. Teachers make the course interesting by using contexts that are real to the students.

They provide very good challenge by asking students to make their own decisions. Some Year 12 teaching, however, allows students to be distracted from their main learning needs.

192. The sixth form courses are well led and well managed resulting in rising standards. The head of department has analysed past performance and has acted on this to improve teaching and learning. The available options now meet students' needs, with the AVCE course in school and computer networking elsewhere in the consortium. The enrichment programme gives an opportunity for Key Skills information and communication technology. At the time of the last inspection, there was no ICT course for sixth form students, and so the improvement of opportunity is good.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

193. Sixth form students use ICT effectively to meet their learning needs. They have enough access to computers for private study. In most subjects, teachers encourage students to use computers for research and work presentation, while some good teaching using ICT was seen during the inspection, for example in science and history.

HUMANITIES

The focus of the inspection was **history**. Students achieve well and the examination results in 2003 were above the national average. Teaching is good and the leadership and management of the subject are very good.

HISTORY

Provision in history is **very good**.

Current standards	Average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and learning	Very good
Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Improvement since previous inspection	Good

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Students achieve well in both years.
- Teaching is consistently very good; teachers know their subject very well and have a good understanding of their students' needs.
- Students work well collaboratively and independently but all need additional support.

COMMENTARY

194. Standards achieved in 2003, in A and AS level examinations, were in line with the national average and results were similar in 2004. Standards have been maintained over the last three years.

195. The observation of work and learning in lessons during the inspection confirms average standards and good level of achievement relative to students' attainment on entry.

Students are developing as good quality historians and they use reference and research techniques to an advantage to analyse evidence and to interpret it. In a lesson observed in Year 12, students demonstrated that they understand the origins of Zionism and how the Dreyfus case in France made reporters like Herzl think about issues of nationalism and the stereotyping of Jews. They know the importance of Martin Luther King in the struggle for civil rights in the USA. Year 13 are building a detailed understanding of the characteristics of Tsarist Russia by learning about the characteristics of Tsar Alexander III and Nicholas II with a view to comparing them with the Stalinist regime. The students are keen and participate fully in their learning, though they need additional prompting to improve and complete their written tasks.

196. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and use it well to support the learning process, balancing group discussions with appropriate intervention to make clear the complexity and stages of the process and to consolidate and build on previous learning. They have good and friendly relationships with their students whom they know well and plan their lessons to meet their individual needs effectively. They engage them well in discussions helping them along by building on their interests and experiences particularly in relation to their essays and assignments. They monitor and evaluate students' work well and guide them on how to improve. They also make very good links with their spiritual, moral, cultural and spiritual development in their teaching.
197. Leadership and management of history are both very good and have ensured that improvement since the last inspection has been good. There is a good system of monitoring and evaluation of students' work and relevant support given to them. Accommodation and resources are good.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

The focus of the inspection was **art and design** and **drama**. Teaching and learning are very good in art and design and good in drama. Students achieve well in drama and very well in art and design. **Music** was sampled and one Year 12 lesson was observed. Standards were average. Students' technology skills are better than their basic musical knowledge. In **media studies**, which was also sampled, students are able to understand the different methods of identifying a target audience through an analysis of advertisements. They are confident in expressing their ideas and challenge and support each other well.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Current standards	Well above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good
Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Improvement since previous inspection	Good

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Standards are improving and are above the national average, particularly at A2 level.

- Teaching is very good and enables students to make very clear gains in their knowledge and understanding.
- The quality of leadership is very good and provides a clear vision.
- Students enjoy their lessons and clearly feel valued.
- Some students are lacking in confidence.
- There is insufficient technical support.

Commentary

198. In 2003, all the students entered for A-level obtained a pass grade, with half gaining the higher A-B grades. As yet unvalidated data for the 2004 vocational entry shows that students did very well.
199. Standards of work seen are very good. This shows very good achievement from students' attainment lower down the school. Students in Year 12 quickly adapt to sixth-form work and are already meeting course requirements very well. They show increasing maturity and strive for originality. Their very well developed drawing and painting skills enable them to represent accurately the images of their 'mind's eye' to paper, canvas and board. Most can ably scale-up preparatory sketches and models into larger well-proportioned images and sculptures, using a variety of mathematical techniques.
200. Students in Year 13 demonstrate very good research skills. They make complex imagery using computers as a starting point for their own work and create portfolios of completed work using Power Point presentation techniques. They benefit from intense individual tuition where teachers challenge their assumptions in order to promote original and personal ideas. Students use sketchbooks purposefully to develop themes, which explore contemporary issues such as status, wealth, power and race. This prompts them to develop their own communicative skills and enriches their cultural understanding.
201. The quality of teaching is very good. Very good levels of verbal and written feedback enable students to know what they need to do to improve. Teachers generously share specialist expertise to enrich students' understanding and capability. The introduction of the vocational courses contributes well to the school's work related programmes. The double award makes AVCE a popular choice.
202. Leadership is very good and accounts for the very good relationships, built upon mutual trust and respect. However, teachers spend too much time preparing lessons because there is insufficient technical support for art. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

Drama

Provision in drama is **good**.

Current standards	Average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and learning	Good
Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Improvement since previous inspection	Good

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Teaching and learning in the sixth form are uniformly good.
- Extra-curricular opportunities for sixth form students are good.
- The two recently appointed drama teachers are knowledgeable and well qualified.
- Students are enthusiastic and hard working.

COMMENTARY

203. Standards in recent A- and AS level examinations have been below the national average with few of the higher grades being scored.
204. The achievement of students is good. In a Year 13 lesson, for instance, students show a good overall understanding of Artaud's drama theories and are able to recreate concrete scenes ready for final performance. They confidently and honestly evaluate their work and can constructively criticise and build on each other's ideas.
205. Students benefit from specialist teachers who have a good knowledge of drama theory and technique and can teach their subject well. Lessons are well planned and structured so that the maximum use is made of the 90-minute periods. Teachers are skilful in shaping lessons but do not dominate; they enable students to develop their own ideas and work constructively together. For instance, in a Year 13 lesson on `Vinegar Tom`, skilful prompts and open ended questioning enabled students to take ownership of their performance and the ideas that created it.
206. The interim management of the drama department by the assistant headteacher is good and support being given to the newly qualified drama staff is good. These two recently appointed new teachers are rebuilding the department with commitment and expertise, helping to ensure that improvement is good.

BUSINESS

The focus was on **business studies**, but **economics** was also sampled. In the Year 12 lesson observed, teaching and learning were very good and standards were in line with course expectations.

BUSINESS STUDIES

Provision in business studies is **good**.

Current standards	Average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and learning	Good
Leadership	Very good
Management	Good
Improvement since previous inspection	N/A

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Teaching and learning are good and students achieve well.
- Courses are well managed, with good links with local businesses.
- Students use ICT well to present their work and record survey results on graphs.
- Accommodation is cramped when classes are large, but teachers manage this well.

COMMENTARY

207. Standards in advanced business courses (AVCE) are average overall. In 2003, AVCE business (double award) the 17 students entered gained results above the national

average, a considerable improvement from below average results in 2002. Standards in 2004 were almost as high and reflect good achievement when related to students' GCSE results on entry.

208. Standards on the intermediate GNVQ course are below the national average, as the 23 students entered in 2003 gained mostly pass rather than merit grades. The 18 students in 2004 showed similar attainment, with three gaining merit grades. Most students achieved well when their results are related to GCSE standards on entry.
209. Current students are achieving well in lessons and work seen and reaching a standard on all courses which is in line with national expectations at this early stage of the year. Year 12 students taking the new BTEC national diploma in personal finance showed a good grasp of the effect of mortgage rate rises on the economy. Those in the large AVCE class were beginning to understand the consequences of a crash in the market. Year 13 AVCE students showed a good understanding of the functions of trade unions and a higher-attaining group were able to analyse marketing strategies for a large retailer effectively, making good use of ICT to present their proposals.
210. Teaching and learning are good overall. Lessons observed demonstrated teachers' very good subject expertise, often based on experience in industry and good, caring relationships with students. Their high expectations and accurate assessment of students' progress, helped them improve work, achieve well and gain very good attitudes. Students of different ethnic groups, male and female, worked very well together, although not all participated fully in the first part of lessons. Despite cramped rooms for a large Year 12 class and insufficient availability of computers in some rooms, students were very keen and co-operative. Students with special educational needs made equally good progress to others.
211. The major expansion of sixth form business courses is a result of very good leadership within the faculty, to which new staff have recently been appointed. The experienced, enthusiastic staff team tracks students' progress well and encourages them to learn independently, often using material from part-time jobs. Well-managed courses include good links with local businesses, but students do not yet make enough use of work placements. Staffing is fully stretched by some large classes, but additional help has been obtained from an experienced college lecturer who knows the school well. Young enterprise companies are flourishing, aided by very good support from a local enterprise consultant and the City Learning Centre. The subject was not inspected previously, but has good capacity to improve further by bettering the quality of some accommodation and reducing some large class sizes.

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		2
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		3
Pupils' achievement	3	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities		3
Attendance	5	4
Attitudes	3	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		3
The quality of education provided by the school		3
The quality of teaching	3	3
How well pupils learn	3	3
The quality of assessment	3	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities		2
Accommodation and resources	3	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety		3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents		3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2	2
The leadership and management of the school		3
The governance of the school	3	3
The leadership of the headteacher		3
The leadership of other key staff	2	3
The effectiveness of management	3	3

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