

# INSPECTION REPORT

**Marshalls Park School**

Romford, Essex

LEA area: Havering

Unique reference number: 102345

Headteacher: Mr Cedric Hendricks

Lead inspector: Brian Rowe

Dates of inspection: 18<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> April 2005

Inspection number: 272679

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:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 – 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	768
School address:	Pettits Lane Romford Essex
Postcode:	RM1 4EH
Telephone number:	01708 724134
Fax number:	01708 746021
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Councillor Geoffrey Starnes
Date of previous inspection:	October 1999

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Marshalls Park is a mixed, comprehensive, community school for pupils aged 11-16, situated in Romford, Essex. The school serves the local area and is over-subscribed. Since the previous inspection the school has gained an Achievement Award for improved academic results and a Sportsmark Award. Pupils come from families that represent a wide range of economic and social backgrounds. There are currently 768 pupils on roll, making it a smaller than average sized secondary school. Nearly 5 per cent of the pupils come from minority ethnic groups, a much lower proportion than average, and one is at an early stage of learning to use the English language. There are no refugees at school and two pupils are in local care. Nine per cent of the pupils receive free school meals and this proportion is below the national average. Pupils' attainment on entry is average overall, but many have under-developed skills in literacy and numeracy. About 9 per cent of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and this is below average. Nearly 30 have a Statement for Special Educational Needs, a proportion that is above average compared to other secondary schools. Pupils' mobility is low and few start or move away from school other than at normal times in their school career. Staff turnover is lower than in most schools, but there has been difficulty in recruiting staff for some subjects.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1695	Brian Rowe	Lead inspector	Special educational needs English as an additional language
19743	Ann Taylor	Lay inspector	
15268	John English	Team inspector	Mathematics
21971	John Glennon	Team inspector	English Drama
31385	Neil Gillespie	Team inspector	Science
20787	Jerry Royle	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Music
2866	Robert Battey	Team inspector	Art and design Citizenship
3555	Carol Emery	Team inspector	Design and technology Business education
3755	Trevor Hulbert	Team inspector	Geography Work-related learning
10895	David Wasp	Team inspector	History Religious education
14446	Barry Simmons	Team inspector	Physical education
33441	Philip Steele	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

Marshalls Park is a **good** and improving school that provides **good** value for money. The headteacher, strongly supported by the senior staff, provides very good leadership. **Good** management ensures effective teaching and learning. Standards are above average and pupils achieve **well** because of the high level of support they receive and the commitment of the teachers.

#### ***The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:***

- The school has a very positive ethos, and as a result pupils feel secure, have very good attitudes to their learning, are happy and develop into mature and confident young citizens.
- The headteacher provides very good leadership and senior staff share his vision and commitment to raise standards and improve the quality of education.
- Standards are above average and pupils achieve well because of their positive attitudes to learning and the good teaching they receive.
- The quality of care and support for pupils is very good.
- The focus to develop literacy skills is insufficiently strong in some subject areas.
- Provision in geography, modern foreign languages and citizenship is unsatisfactory.
- The provision in mathematics and history is very good, and in drama it is excellent and plays a very important part in the life of the school.
- The school has very good relationships with the parents, who hold the school in very high regard.

Overall improvements since the previous inspection have been good. The issues identified in the previous inspection have been successfully addressed, apart from ensuring the provision for collective worship meets statutory requirements and reducing the rate of temporary exclusions. The priorities identified in the school's improvement plan demonstrate that the school has the capacity to continue to improve.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

#### Year 11 results

Performance compared with:		all schools			Similar schools
		2002	2003	2004	2004
Year 11	GCSE/GNVQ examinations	C	C	B	B

*Key: A<sup>+</sup> - 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 at the end of Year 9.*

Pupils start school in Year 7 with attainment that is close to average, although a high proportion have under-developed literacy skills, especially writing. Since the previous inspection, the results from the national Year 9 tests indicate that standards have been rising in all subjects and are now above the national average in English, mathematics and science. When these results are compared with schools who have pupils with a similar prior attainment in national tests at the end of Year 6, they make good progress overall and achieve well. Results in GCSE examinations show a continual improvement over the past years and were above the national and similar school average in 2004. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 make good progress and achieve well. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as other pupils. Pupils develop satisfactory literacy and good numeracy skills as they move through the school. Their skills using computers and other technology are also satisfactory.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development throughout the school is good. Attendance is satisfactory and punctuality is good. Students have very positive attitudes to school. They behave well and develop very positive relationships with each other and staff.

### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment of pupils' work is **good** throughout the school. There are examples of very good teaching to be found in most departments. The curriculum is **good** overall, and there is a good range of opportunities for enrichment. The quality of accommodation and resources to meet the needs of the curriculum are good. Arrangements to ensure pupils' care and welfare are **good** overall. Pupils receive very **good** support, advice, and guidance. The extent of the school's involvement of pupils in its work and development is **good**. The school's relationship with parents is very **good**. Links with other schools and the community are **good**.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The quality and effectiveness of governance, leadership and management throughout the school are **good**. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. There are effective management systems within the school and these have a significant impact on raising standards and expectations in school. Financial management is good. Most middle managers are committed and contribute effectively to whole-school planning and curriculum initiatives, however, the quality of subject management is unsatisfactory in geography, modern foreign languages and citizenship. The school does not meet statutory requirements for reporting on citizenship and providing daily collective worship.

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

Parents and pupils have very positive views, and the school's image in the local community is strong. Pupils say that the school is a safe environment where everyone is respected and treated fairly. They feel that their opinions are heard, valued and acted upon. They are proud of belonging to the school.

### **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Strengthen the focus on developing literacy skills in all subjects
- Improve the provision for geography, modern foreign languages and citizenship.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Provide a daily act of collective worship.
- Report to parents on pupils' progress in citizenship.



## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Since the previous inspection, the results from the national Year 9 tests indicate that standards have been rising in all subjects and are now **above** the national average in English, mathematics and science. When these results are compared with schools who have pupils with a similar prior attainment in national tests at the end of Year 6, they make good progress overall and **achieve well**. Results in GCSE examinations show a continual improvement over the past three years and were **above** national and similar school averages in 2004. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 make good progress and achieve **well**. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs and from ethnic minority backgrounds achieve as well as other pupils.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- In Years 7 to 9, the standards of work seen in mathematics, science and English are above average.
- Pupils do not reach their full potential in geography, French and Spanish because they are not taught the higher levels of work throughout the school.
- Standards have been rising steadily in Years 10 to 11 in most subjects over recent years.
- The GCSE results were above the national average in many subjects in 2004.
- The very good attitudes to learning in Years 10 and 11 contribute to the good achievement at GCSE by virtually all pupils.
- The achievement of pupils from Years 7 to 11 is good.

#### Commentary

##### Years 7 – 9

1. Pupils start school with levels of attainment that are average, but a high proportion have under-developed literacy skills. The table below indicates that by the end of Year 9 pupils reach standards that are above the national average. Standards are in line with the national average in other subjects except in geography and design and technology where it is below average. The school reviews and evaluates its performance data in detail, discussing any emerging issues with subject departments. This process has helped subject leaders to review the effectiveness of teaching and learning and has played a major part in raising standards and achievement across the whole school. The Year 9 results for 2004 represent good achievement, which is especially strong in mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well due to the very good support and guidance they receive. There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls, nor the few pupils who have ethnic minority backgrounds.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	34.3 (32.1)	33.5 (33.4)
Mathematics	37.1 (35.3)	35.7 (35.4)
Science	33.8 (33.2)	33.1 (33.6)

*Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

## Year 10 and 11

2. The table below indicates that pupils reach standards that are above the national average and their achievement is good. Many pupils reach standards at or above those predicted from their end-of-Year 9 test results. However, in geography, French and Spanish pupils do not reach their full potential, as many are not sufficiently challenged. Standards of current work are above national expectations in most subjects, but in modern foreign languages, geography and business studies they are below average. Pupils make good progress in lessons due to good teaching and learning and the very positive attitudes of the pupils.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	65 (52)	52 (52)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	89 (87)	89 (89)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	97 (95)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	35.1 (32.4)	34.9 (34.7)

*There were 161 pupils in the year group (91 boys, 70 girls). The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

3. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in relation to their individual targets. These may include improving their literacy, personal organisation, behaviour, and self-confidence in relating with other pupils and adults, and to new situations. In subjects and other areas of the curriculum, they achieve well. The standards attained by pupils with special educational needs are usually above those predicted by their prior attainment

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

Pupils' attitudes are **very good** and their behaviour is **good**. Their personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development, is **good** overall. The attendance rate is rising after a period of decline and is **satisfactory**. Punctuality to lessons is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Relationships are friendly, because staff and pupils afford each other a great deal of respect.
- The headteacher has high expectations for behaviour and the moral influence in school is strong.
- Drama plays a key role in encouraging the personal development of pupils.
- Pupils enjoy their lessons and take a pride in belonging to the school.
- The school is an extremely civilised, pleasant place to be and pupils treat the well-kept buildings and grounds with respect.
- Fixed term exclusions remain high, although there have been no permanent exclusions this academic year.

### **Commentary**

4. Pupils are likeable individuals who quickly make visitors feel welcome. They are keen and interested in their lessons and have a palpable pride in belonging to the school. Relationships are warm and friendly, based upon teachers who like their pupils and want them to do well. This ethos is due to the direct influence of the headteacher. He is held in very high regard by

pupils because he makes an effort to get to know them and because of his welcoming personality.

5. The buildings and pleasant grounds are treated with a great deal of respect as pupils appreciate their attractive surroundings. During conversations with pupils, inspectors noted how positive pupils are about the school and how they feel a sense of belonging.
6. There is a high expectation of good behaviour in school, with staff providing good role models for pupils to aspire to. The moral tone in the school is strong and provides pupils with good guidance about what is, and is not, acceptable. Drama is one of the subjects pupils really enjoy at Marshalls Park. This is because of the excellence of the drama department. It is a strong contributor to pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development. One example illustrating this was when pupils performed pieces dealing with racism, bullying, stereotyping, homophobia and the dangers of extreme political views. Performances were used as a focus for a day of promoting awareness of prejudice and discrimination for younger pupils. Drama makes a major contribution towards developing their self-confidence, especially for those who need a boost in self-esteem, and is why the social opportunities are very good. When pupils are set a challenge, they really rise to the occasion. Through individual and group efforts, they raised thousands of pounds this year towards their bid to become a specialist school in the performing arts.

## Attendance

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	8.0	School data:	1.0
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.*

7. Attendance is rising after a period of decline. Figures to date reveal the rate is just about in line with the national average. The school is developing far more rigorous procedures for checking on pupils who are away and also are improving the reward systems, having canvassed pupil opinions on current incentives. So far this academic year, holidays taken during term time have accounted for three-quarters of all absences. Pupils are punctual to lessons, despite the large site.

## Exclusions

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

### **Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	768	160	8
Black or Black British – African	2	3	0

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

8. Figures for temporary and permanent exclusions for the last academic year are very high, compared with other schools nationally. This was also the case during the time of the two previous inspections. There have been no permanent exclusions to date this year, however, which is a distinct improvement, compared with eight last academic year. A range of strategies employed, including work with a behaviour support teacher, mentoring, counselling and internal exclusions with heads of year are all playing their part in this improvement.
9. The use of temporary exclusions remains very high. The headteacher uses temporary exclusions as part of his strategy for keeping the standard of behaviour in the school high. Whilst there are a good number of behaviour and pastoral support systems in place to help pupils, transgressions such as swearing, smoking, refusal to co-operate, and fighting, receive automatic exclusions, usually for two or three days. Before this, the school will usually have been working with parents to improve their child's behaviour. The majority of pupils are only excluded once, although five pupils have been excluded for between one and two weeks, since September. The fact that there is a very positive, orderly atmosphere in the school, behaviour is good and pupils achieve well, indicates the measures, albeit controversial, are working well.

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

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment of pupils' work is **good** throughout the school. The curriculum is **good** overall, and there is a **good** range of opportunities for enrichment. The quality of accommodation and resources to meet the needs of the curriculum is **good**. Arrangements to ensure pupils' care and welfare are **good** overall. Pupils receive **very good** support, advice, and guidance. The extent of the school's involvement of pupils in its work and development is **good**. The school's relationship with parents is **very good**. Links with other schools and the community are **good**.

### **Teaching and learning**

The overall quality of teaching, learning and assessment of pupils' work is **good** throughout the school.

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

- The good quality of teaching and learning ensures that pupils achieve well and make good progress in lessons.
- The effective teaching motivates pupils and promotes positive attitudes and their personal development.
- Teaching is not effective enough in modern foreign languages and geography or adequately planned in citizenship.
- Not all teachers sufficiently explain the purpose of the lesson to pupils or give them opportunities to reflect on what they have learnt.
- Some teachers do not use a wide enough range of teaching strategies.
- There is consistent very good teaching in mathematics, drama, history and religious education.

### **Commentary**

10. At the previous inspection, teaching was judged to be satisfactory. The overall quality of teaching has improved considerably, especially in Years 10 and 11. The impact of teaching on pupils' learning is good and as a result they achieve well in most subjects. Over the last few years, improving teaching has been a focus for staff development. Effective management has ensured that improvement to teaching and learning has been accomplished in many subjects and examination courses. The pupils are very positive about the school and the teaching they receive. In lessons, they are well behaved and have very positive attitudes to their work. Teachers have established very positive relationships with the pupils and this makes a substantial contribution to their learning and personal development.

## Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 100 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5 (5%)	28 (28%)	42 (42%)	23 (23%)	2 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

11. The above table indicates a high proportion of good and better teaching, and a relatively low proportion of unsatisfactory lessons. Teaching is good in all years, but not all teachers share the objectives of the lesson or provide opportunities for pupils to consolidate their learning and raise standards even further. The learning was satisfactory in some lessons only because of the pupils' very positive attitudes to the school, even though the lessons lacked pace and challenge.
12. Despite the overall very good profile of teaching and learning, there are still aspects that need to be improved further. These are related in some lessons to insufficient planning to match work to pupils' ability. In a few lessons, teachers did not have high enough expectations of what pupils could achieve, especially the most able. In a few subjects there is insufficient internal self-review leading to strategies for improvements to teaching and learning, but in others this is a very strong feature. There is consistently very good teaching in mathematics, drama, history and religious education, but teaching and learning are less effective in modern foreign languages, geography and citizenship.
13. The school has good assessment procedures that are aimed at improving learning and raising standards. Pupils' performance in all subjects is tracked from their entry into school and suitable targets are set. Their National Curriculum levels are assessed each term and parents informed. Pupils' present level in each subject and their target grade are printed inside their planners, and all know how well they are doing. Thus pupils' progress is assessed very closely by senior managers with a view to ensuring that all pupils work at the highest possible standard. Concerns about pupils who fail to meet their target grades are passed to heads of year for further investigation.
14. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good. The co-ordinator provides very good support to some Year 10 and 11 pupils who follow a life skills course or take a reduced number of GCSE examinations. Some Year 7 pupils are grouped in small classes for additional focus on literacy skills and they receive good teaching. Teaching assistants give very good support to pupils with special educational needs, and in a number of subjects teachers discuss their plans with them before the lesson. They make sure pupils understand the instructions for a task so that they can work independently and make good progress.
15. In nearly all subjects assessment is used to help pupils to learn. Work is regularly assessed in terms of National Curriculum levels or GCSE grades so that pupils know how well they are doing. They are shown what they need to do to improve. There are particularly good systems in history and mathematics where pupils often learn by assessing their own work. In geography and modern foreign languages, however, marking is not used sufficiently well to improve learning.

### The curriculum

The curriculum is **good** overall, and there is a **good** range of opportunities for enrichment. The quality of accommodation and resources to meet the needs of the curriculum is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although there are currently limited options for lower attaining pupils in Years 10 and 11, this has been well addressed for September 2005.
- There is a good range of extra-curricular clubs, visits and performances.
- The school building is a very pleasant place to work, and staffing and other resources are generally good.

### Commentary

16. The curriculum is effective and most pupils achieve well in tests and examinations. In Years 7 to 9 there is a generous provision of time given to the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, while other subjects are given a satisfactory amount of time, with some limitations in provision for religious education and ICT. In Years 10 and 11, there is inadequate provision for religious education and the option system is too rigid to meet the needs of all the pupils. In science, too many pupils are entered for the single option subject in Year 11. However, all these deficiencies have been thoroughly addressed in the curriculum plan for September 2005. New subjects are to be introduced in Year 10, especially some new vocational options. The planned provision for the lower attaining pupils in Year 10 is much improved, and includes further courses arranged in conjunction with the local college. Overall, equality of access to the curriculum and equality of opportunity for pupils are very good.
17. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. They have full access to all subjects and areas of the curriculum, and participate fully in extra-curricular activities. In Year 7 two 'focus' groups have been formed to support the induction of pupils and provide support for developing literacy and numeracy skills. This curriculum initiative is very successful. Pupils' progress with reading is recorded, and tested at intervals. Teaching assistants are attached to subject areas so that they are knowledgeable about the topics that pupils are learning. In Years 10 and 11, pupils who would find nine GCSE subjects inappropriate may take alternative accredited courses. This curriculum provision is also very effective.
18. A good range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities are available for all pupils. Involvement in clubs and sporting activities is a strength and some pupils help with organising and supporting events. This makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development and helps enhance the positive ethos in the school. There is a good range of drama and music activities. There are many opportunities both formal and informal for pupils to receive help with homework or examination revision outside lesson times.
19. Accommodation and resources, including staffing, are good overall. The school building is very well cared for, and wall spaces have been imaginatively used for displays and information of a visually pleasing as well as often inspiring nature. Some departments have used their spaces very well to provide an exceptionally stimulating learning environment, especially history, but art has a teaching room that is too small and this restricts learning. There are sufficient numbers of qualified teaching staff for almost all subject areas, and those with extensive experience in this school are a particular strength. There is also a strong team of non-teaching staff, including site managers, visiting specialists, technical, administrative, and classroom support staff. There has been considerable recent investment in ICT and as a result many classrooms now have interactive whiteboards that are being used to enhance teaching and learning. The library, which is well managed, has recently been provided with increased capitation and is beginning to establish a more comprehensive stock.

### Care, guidance and support

Arrangements to ensure pupils' care and welfare are **good** overall. Pupils receive **very good** support, advice, and guidance. The extent of the school's involvement of pupils in its work and development is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- By using the philosophy of 'praising the good in each pupil', pastoral staff successfully help pupils to achieve their potential.
- There are very good systems for keeping pupils and their parents informed about how well they are progressing.
- Careers guidance is carefully thought out and pupils are well prepared to make decisions about their future.
- Year group councils leading to a whole school council help spearhead useful improvements which are benefiting pupils.

### **Commentary**

20. Pupils are very well cared for because staff believe in getting to know them well. Relationships are very positive and the school pays particular attention to helping the individual child. Pastoral co-ordinators responsible for a year group carry out their duties well and all have a strong philosophy of praising the good in every pupil.
21. Pupils are well briefed about how they are getting on and where they need to improve. This is through a system of termly reports, which are accessible to pupils via the school intranet as well as through the usual channels of discussions with form tutors. All pupils get a mini-version of this report to put in their diary, which helps them focus on what is needed to improve. A review day in December provides another chance for pupils, parents and form tutors to meet and discuss how things are going.
22. Child protection procedures are well established and the school has a good number of staff trained to deal with any issues if they emerge. Many staff are taking advantage of a distance learning course organised by the National Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children and this is good practice. Health and safety awareness is good and there are developing systems in place to check on equipment and premises.
23. Pupils with special educational needs receive very good care, guidance and support. In addition to the teachers and teaching assistants attached to the special educational needs department, they know that help is available from any member of staff. Pupils judge their induction to the school to be very good. Their progress and current needs are monitored and reviewed at regular meetings of the special educational needs staff. The acting special educational needs co-ordinator monitors their achievement by analysing progress made which is recorded on the school Intranet.
24. Pupils are well prepared to make decisions affecting their future careers. This is because the careers programme is carefully thought out and contains some innovative elements. A new programme devised between the careers co-ordinator and pastoral co-ordinators is currently being delivered, carefully adapted to contain a good balance of activities. Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 enjoy a successful industry day each year, involving local employers linking in with departments, for example, science and design and technology.
25. The school council meets termly with the headteacher and chair of governors. They succeed in making changes, such as a school radio, summer uniform and healthier food in the canteen. School councillors are good ambassadors for the school and argue their cases well. Councillors would like to meet as a full council more often than termly and feel they would be able to make more effective inroads, if this were the case. They also feel their profile in the school needs raising, as other pupils are not always aware of their work. They are capable of much more responsibility for the organisation and management of the council than they are currently given.

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

The school's relationship with parents is **very good**. Links with other schools and the community are **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are very pleased with the school and it is a very popular choice in the area.
- Parents are really welcomed and their views actively sought and acted upon.
- The parenting skills courses are a particularly good example of the school identifying a need and taking the initiative, with positive results.
- The school keep parents very well informed about how their child is progressing.
- An impressive number of parents meetings are held, giving information on a wide variety of useful topics.
- Serious concerns of Year 10 parents regarding college courses have not been dealt with as promptly as they could have been.

### **Commentary**

26. Results of the school's own survey and the views expressed at the inspection parent's meeting confirmed parents' high level of satisfaction with the school. It is a popular choice in the area and heavily oversubscribed. A major reason for parents being happy with the school is because they are fully consulted, kept very well informed and actively encouraged to comment on school practice, making the whole process of education more accessible to parents.
27. The Parental Involvement Group (affectionately known as PIG group!) do some sterling work by looking at school practices and suggesting how they can be improved. They have suggested alterations to the homework diary, helped improve the quality of food and snacks on offer, reviewed the prospectus and discussed the behaviour and discipline policy. This kind of involvement is a particularly good example of parental involvement at its best. The school also benefits from a very active Parent Teacher Association who raise considerable sums of money each year.
28. One area of serious concern for a small number of Year 10 parents has been the unsatisfactory quality of off-site college courses their children have been receiving. The school have not dealt quickly enough with parents' concerns and salutary lessons have been learned, both by the school and college.
29. Information to parents is very good quality. They receive termly reports about how their child is progressing, in addition to a parent's evening plus a review day where they meet with the form tutor. Year 7 parents are also invited to an evening where teachers explain the result of cognitive ability tests they have conducted to help them gauge the ability levels of new pupils. This is unusual and to their credit, there are not many schools who discuss these test results with parents.
30. Having realised some parents need help coping with their teenager children, the school has devised its own parenting skills course, where two teachers work with small number of parents helping them learn new strategies to communicate more effectively at home. This has been a huge success and parents (and their children) speak positively about the difference it has made to their lives. This is but another strand showing the school's determination to try and involve all pupils and their parents in education at school.
31. The school has established good relationships with its partners in the educational and wider community. The ICT department has good links with partner primaries, who use school equipment for their weekly computer clubs. Primary schools also benefit from a Marshalls Park ICT teacher who does some outreach work with primary pupils. Links with the local Queen's Theatre are positive, and pupils benefit from training in lighting and design techniques.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**



The overall leadership and management of the school are **good**. The leadership of key staff and the effectiveness of management are **good** and have a significant impact on raising expectations in school. The leadership of the headteacher is **very good**. The governance of the school is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The clear vision and commitment of the headteacher inspires and motivates others.
- There is strong support from the governing body.
- Effective induction and performance management systems, linked to high quality training opportunities, are in place for all staff.
- The quality of subject management is unsatisfactory in geography, modern foreign languages and citizenship.
- Procedures for monitoring across the school lack rigour in literacy and citizenship.
- Financial management is good.
- The governors do not ensure there is daily collective worship.

### **Commentary**

32. The headteacher's very good leadership has been a key factor in the school's success. His clarity of vision and measured implementation of change have influenced all aspects of the school's work. Central to this vision is the commitment to raise standards that are based on valuing individuals and encouraging the potential of all pupils. With good support from other key staff he has created a climate for innovation that shows in the quality of teaching and the attitude of pupil to their studies. The headteacher attributes the school's success to all the teachers and staff working in the school, and he supports them fully in taking on new initiatives and developments that will provide pupils with the widest range of educational opportunities. Throughout the school there is a strong sense of shared purpose, which communicates itself to pupils and parents. The headteacher has a very visible presence around the school, he knows his pupils very well, and he makes himself very accessible to parents, pupils and staff. He has established a strong leadership team with clear responsibilities, and all share his commitment to raising standards.
33. The quality of management is good. The previous inspection expressed concerns about the efficiency of line management and the monitoring for ensuring consistency in this area. These issues have been addressed fully and there is now a clearly defined management structure with clear job descriptions. There are regular reviews of the work of departments and an effective system for monitoring performance data. The quality of management at departmental level is most effective in mathematics, history, physical education and religious education. Management is unsatisfactory in geography, modern foreign languages and citizenship. The school has developed clear self-evaluation strategies and has an effective development plan with a timed framework for action. However, procedures for monitoring literacy and citizenship across the school lack rigour.
34. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very well led and managed by an acting co-ordinator and senior teacher. The team teaching assistants are very well deployed to meet the identified needs of pupils. The special educational needs code of practice<sup>1</sup> is met both in spirit and in practice. The governors are well informed about all issues and support the department well.
35. Teachers are suitably qualified and experienced to teach the curriculum. Appraisal arrangements are in place and clearly linked to the school's priorities for improvement. There is very good provision for the induction of new staff and a programme of meetings and professional discussions that are well received by staff. There is a broad range of training opportunities for all staff that have a clear link to the school's priorities.

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<sup>1</sup> Legislation that guides the statutory requirements for pupils with special educational needs.

36. The governance of the school is good. Since the previous inspection there has been considerable change in the personnel on the governing body. They are now well led, hard working and committed. Many have taken advantage of the local authority's governors' training that has resulted in them becoming more efficient in their governor roles. They have a clear vision for the future development of the school, and are becoming more competent in their understanding of its present strengths and weaknesses. There is a very well organised committee structure that ensures that governors are aware of developments in all aspects of the school's life. They give very good support to the headteacher and staff. Decisions about curriculum developments, for example, which specialist college scheme to support, reflects their desire to get the very best for the pupils in terms of facilities and funding. Their work is well informed providing strategies and policy framework for the operation of the school. Governors are not fulfilling their legal obligation to ensure that the school holds a daily act of collective worship.
37. The previous inspection report urged the need for more effective financial planning. This has now been achieved and financial management is good. The finance committee of the governing body oversees procedures well and budget planning is closely linked with the school improvement plan and to curricular planning. Principles of best value are applied rigorously. The school has made good improvement since the previous inspection, particularly in the areas of raising standards and in ensuring efficient management.

## Financial information

### *Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005*

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	3,270,013	Balance from previous year	29,734
Total expenditure	3,272,466	Balance carried forward to the next	27,281
Expenditure per pupil	3547		

## OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

### Work-related learning

Provision for work-related learning is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Careers education is well organised and pupils are well informed.
- Innovative leadership and effective management are rapidly improving the range and impact of work-related education
- Work experience provides a good match to pupils' needs and interests.
- Pupils in Years 9 to 11 study very well organised course units that correspond to their interests and abilities.
- Monitoring of provision in Years 7 to 9 is developing but it does not yet extend to sufficient curriculum areas.

### Commentary

38. Careers education is systematically organised for all pupils from Year 7. Well-planned business experience days provide a wide variety of relevant information about the workplace. In Year 9, pupils get good support and advice before choosing subject options. The good careers' advice continues into Years 10 and 11. There is a well-stocked and accessible careers library that ensures pupils are well informed.

39. Work experience is very well organised by the school and is available to all pupils in Year 10. Pupils' record books are well structured and carefully maintained. The school takes considerable care to ensure that placements meet pupils' interests and they express their appreciation of the efforts made by the school.
40. Provision for less traditionally academic pupils includes a small, but good range of vocational courses in Years 10 and 11. There is an innovative and successful vocational inclusion programme for a small group of Year 11 pupils. This and a life skills course make good use of links with local businesses and Havering College. Integration with the school's personal and social education programme means that pupils make clear connections between their developing personal management skills and those required by employers.
41. The leadership of work-related learning is good. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and energetic. Liaison, both within the school and with external agencies, is good and has successfully raised the status of work-related elements in the school's curriculum. Close monitoring of course developments ensure that provision is efficient and matches pupils' interests.

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

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

### ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

#### English

Provision in English is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are achieving well because of the effective teaching and learning.
- GCSE results in 2004 were below the national average and below the standard of most other subjects in the school.
- Assessment procedures are now being used well to help raise standards, but are not linked to National Curriculum levels.
- Good leadership and management are responsible for the recent improvement in the department.

#### Commentary

42. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2004 were well above the national and similar school average, an improvement on the previous two years when results had been below average. Standards of work seen in Year 9 are above average, reflecting the recent improvement in test results. As pupils are at the national average when they enter the school in Year 7 this represents good achievement. Most pupils speak in an interesting and lively way. By Year 9, high ability pupils show good insight into *Macbeth* while most read sufficiently well for different purposes. The department is aware that many pupils enter Year 7 with under-developed writing skills and therefore concentrates on this aspect. Consequently, pupils improve well and by Year 9 pupils have good technical control and write with some enthusiasm and sophistication although low ability pupils make basic mistakes and find it difficult to use correct sentence structures. Pupils with special educational needs are successfully taught in small focus groups that concentrate on improving their basic literacy skills. These pupils make good progress during the year.
43. Results in GCSE in both English and English literature in 2004 were below the national average and pupils did not do as well as in their other subjects. This was mostly the result of severe staffing difficulties and previous results had been close to the national average. Although in 2004 virtually all pupils gained at least a pass grade in both subjects the proportion attaining the highest grades was low. There had been no departmental leadership for two years and now staff have been appointed standards have significantly improved. Work seen in Years 10 and 11 is now above the national average and pupils are achieving well. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and there is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls.
44. Pupils learn well throughout the school because teaching is good. Teachers plan lessons very well using the national strategy to very good effect. The good pace to lessons helps pupils maintain their concentration. Teachers are encouraging and provide work that is well matched to pupils of all abilities. Too often, however, teachers fail to consolidate learning by helping pupils at the end of the lesson to review what they have learned. Good use is made of drafting with pupils usually showing pride in their work by word-processing their final draft. In the very best lessons pupils show a love for learning arising from the teacher's skill and enthusiasm.
45. Assessment procedures are good. Pupils know how to improve because they are given a target after each piece of work although these are often not linked to National Curriculum levels or GCSE grades. Nevertheless all pupils know the level at which they are working.

46. After a lengthy period without a head of department or second in department, leadership and management are now good. The subject leader focuses closely on raising standards by improving teaching and learning and all teachers feel they are supported and valued. Strengths and weaknesses are fully analysed and actions prioritised. The new schemes of work are of good quality although they do not take enough account of pupils' different abilities. Data is not yet used fully to analyse trends and set work that is well matched to pupils' individual ability. There is a good programme of activities outside the classroom. The subject leadership is responsible for the recent improvement in standards, achievement and teaching. Improvement has been good over the last year and satisfactory since the previous inspection.

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

47. There has recently been an extended period without any one teacher having overall responsibility for literacy. The present co-ordinator was appointed at Easter 2004 and since then there has been a fresh focus throughout the school. Standards of literacy are average, but some departments are placing more emphasis than others on improving literacy skills. In art and design and history there is a determined focus on literacy. In both subjects teachers emphasise its importance by giving pupils plenty of guidance, for example, in how to frame written answers, and in expecting pupils to correct errors of spelling and grammar. Consequently, literacy standards are improving and having a beneficial effect on pupils' achievement. In other subjects, however, there is less emphasis on literacy although there is a general awareness of the need to raise standards of writing and researching information. To this effect nearly all teachers use some strategies. For example, they insist on pupils using correct technical terms and generally are aware of the importance of literacy. However, in geography there is not enough attention paid to developing literacy skills.

### **Modern foreign languages**

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

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

- Instability in staffing has had a detrimental effect on the effectiveness of the modern foreign languages department and is a key element in the current below average standards.
- The monitoring of pupils' progress is inadequately developed.
- The good level of responsiveness of pupils is the result of supportive teaching.
- The schemes of work do not meet the needs of pupils and consequently do not support adequately teaching and learning.

### **Commentary**

48. Pupils start in Year 7 with little experience of learning a foreign language. In 2004 the teacher assessments in Year 9 were in line with national expectations. Current standards of work in Year 9 are average overall and pupils' achievement has been satisfactory. In 2004, GCSE results were below average in French and Spanish. Boys' performance was well below that of girls' because many lacked motivation and enthusiasm for the subject. Standards observed in Year 10 were in line with expectations, but in Year 11 they were below average. Achievement in Years 10 and 11 has been unsatisfactory, in part due to the instability of staffing. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress, but their less developed literacy skills slows progress and restricts standards.
49. Teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 are satisfactory and most pupils make sound progress. In Years 10 and 11 less effective teaching over time has led to below average results in GCSE. Teaching and learning in Years 10 and 11 are unsatisfactory. In lessons observed during the inspection pupils made satisfactory progress. When teachers ensure pace and challenge, as in a Year 8 Spanish class, pupils make good progress. However, the slower pace of work seen in a majority of lessons meant pupils were too passive and their progress at best satisfactory. Teachers usually support and encourage pupils well and as a result most

are keen to participate in lessons. In some lessons there was an unnecessary amount of English used and insufficient opportunities were given to pupils to copy and practise new vocabulary, and consequently progress slowed. The marking of pupils' work is regular and comments are encouraging, but do not always contain advice on how to improve.

50. Regular opportunities are given to higher attaining pupils to develop their writing skills by producing more extended pieces of writing. The standard of this work is good and demonstrates a good knowledge of the grammar and structures required in Years 7 to 9. Good extra examination support is being given to Year 11 pupils to help in their preparation for GCSE examinations.
51. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. The scope for the head of department to establish an effective team within a framework of thorough working practices has been severely hindered by the instability of the staffing within the department in recent years. However, there is a lack of procedures for monitoring pupils' work and assessment data is not collected centrally and therefore there is a lack of information to support future learning. There is little monitoring of teachers' work and this hinders sharing best practice. Schemes of work are not tailored to the needs of pupils and do not support sufficiently the work within the department.
52. A Year 8 visit to Boulogne was successful and clearly enjoyed by the pupils, and added to their motivation in French. However, there are still only limited opportunities for pupils to use their language knowledge beyond the classroom through visits or correspondence links. Overall the department has made unsatisfactory progress since the previous inspection as GCSE results have declined. Instability in the staffing of the modern languages department is hampering its progress and is having a detrimental impact on pupils' standards.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The pupils make very good progress, and standards are above average.
- The teaching overall is very good, often with excellent features.
- Lessons have pace and variety and extend pupils of all levels of ability.
- Leadership is excellent and the teachers are well qualified and dedicated.

### **Commentary**

53. Standards in mathematics are above average by the end of Years 9 and 11. In the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2004, a high proportion of pupils gained at least the expected Level 5 and over half gained one level higher. These results were above the average for all schools and for similar schools and pupils achieved well. In GCSE examinations in 2004, pupils gained results that were well above average. Over the last five years results in the GCSE examinations have steadily improved.
54. The achievement overall of the pupils from their entry into the school up to Year 11 is very good. Higher attaining pupils are given challenging work, and all pupils work at a level appropriate to their abilities. This level of achievement is the result of very good teaching and the pupils' exceptionally mature and sensible attitude to learning. Work in exercise books is well organised, accurate and uses correct terms and processes. The pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as their peers, due to effective additional personal support from their teachers and the teaching assistants.
55. The quality of the teaching and learning overall is very good. As a result the pupils make very good progress in most lessons. Around one lesson in every two is very good, and occasionally excellent, and the remaining lessons are normally good. A key feature of all the lessons is the

combination of the high quality of professional expertise of the teachers and the excellent relationships with the pupils, which results in a very positive learning environment. Lessons have pace, variety and are well planned to meet the needs of pupils of differing levels of ability within each set so that the pupils become fully involved in the lesson, and do a great deal of work in the time available. However, some pupils have difficulty keeping up with the pace, and not all teachers react quickly enough so that any misconceptions or misunderstandings are corrected.

56. Leadership is excellent, and management of the department is very good. The head of department provides an excellent role model both in teaching and in her dedication to raising the standards achieved by the pupils and in the search for continual improvement. Assessment of the progress of individual pupils, and processes to involve the pupils in assessing their own progress, are excellent. The members of the department form a strong cohesive team, providing mutual support and an admirable consistency in standards of professional practice. The department is well resourced, and well equipped with interactive whiteboards, which are beginning to be used effectively to provide additional visual presentations of mathematical concepts. A good range of activities outside lesson times supports the achievement of higher standards. Improvement since the previous inspection is very good as standards have risen. The achievement of pupils has improved, as has the quality of teaching.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

57. Standards of numeracy are good; so that whenever mathematical knowledge or skills are required to understand a topic in any lesson outside mathematics, the pupils are well able to apply them. Some good examples were seen in this inspection. In science pupils used algebra effectively dealing with problems in physics. In history, data representation helped pupils to understand issues related to historical infant mortality. In ICT, the formulation needed to construct spreadsheets was tackled with confidence. However, in some subjects, opportunities to use numeracy, and at the same time to help the pupils further develop their skills, were missed.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

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

- Pupils' very good attitudes to learning lead to above average standards.
- Pupils' work is very well assessed, which helps them to improve well.
- Teachers' very good knowledge of their subjects and commitment to running enrichment activities results in a positive and enjoyable experience for pupils.
- Some gifted pupils do not have sufficient extension work to challenge them fully.

#### **Commentary**

58. Standards are above average and achievement is good throughout the school. Pupils enter school with average standards. By the end of Year 9 they reach above average standards, representing good achievement. Examination results for GCSE science in 2004 are above average and have improved over the past four years. Progress in lessons is good, with boys and girls making similar gains to their learning. Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is good. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, as do pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds. Pupils' very good attitude to learning and an improved curriculum provides pupils with enjoyable learning experiences in science.
59. Teaching and learning are good in all years. All of the lessons observed during the inspection were good or better. Teachers' very good subject knowledge and their good understanding of how to communicate effectively leads to highly motivated pupils who enjoy science. Teachers

plan their lessons well and encourage pupils to study hard, resulting in very high expectation and challenge in all lessons. Assessment of pupils' work is good, and very good in Years 10 and 11. Pupils have a good appreciation of how they could improve because of helpful and informative teacher comments. Pupils acquire good knowledge and understanding through effective teaching methods, particularly in practical investigations. Modern teaching aids results in faster pace and greater learning opportunities for pupils. ICT is also used very effectively so that pupils, including those with special educational needs, are able to write extensively and with confidence. Although most pupils have work that extends and stretches them, there is a very small group of gifted pupils who could be challenged further if given more extension work. There is a good focus on improving pupils' literacy skills, enabling access to higher grades in tests.

60. Leadership and management are good. The head of department is ably supported by his second in department. They have a good understanding about effective teaching of the curriculum and they have built up a good team of teachers who are supported well. Teaching is monitored well and effective action is taken to improve teachers' performance. There is a good understanding of how the department can improve and good systems are in place to monitor the achievement of all pupils. The local education authority's advisor has had a significant effect in helping the department to raise standards by suggesting ways of improving teaching strategies and revising the curriculum to make learning science more enjoyable for pupils. Although there are presently too many pupils opting for single award GCSE science, the department has made good improvement in allowing more pupils greater access to dual award GCSE science and the single award is being phased out in September 2005. There are no effective links with primary schools at present to improve the induction and transition of Year 7 pupils. The good range of enrichment activities and trips contributes to the success of the department.
61. Accommodation and resources are very good. Laboratories are clean, bright and spacious and have good wall displays. Highly valued, well-qualified technicians make a valuable contribution to the effectiveness of the department. Laboratory equipment, chemicals and radiological sources are well maintained and safely stored. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection. ICT is fully embedded in the science curriculum and standards have risen.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in information and communication technology is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' positive attitude to the subject and the national strategy for ICT contribute to achievement and raising standards.
- The good starter sessions and activities quickly engage pupils' interest leading to good learning.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the use of ICT beyond the school.
- Pupils' knowledge of control technology has not been developed.

### **Commentary**

62. Pupils join the school with well-established presentation skills using ICT. Their experience of the other skills, though are varied and generally below the expected level. With the benefit of good teaching, pupils' positive attitude to the subject and the well-embedded National ICT Strategy, progress is rapid with pupils reaching the expected level by Year 9. Pupils' achievement in Years 7 to 9 is good. However, pupils' understanding of control technology is under-developed. The main reason for this is the lack of opportunities to study this element of the National Curriculum. The school is aware of this and plans to include this element in the later part of the Year 9 course. Pupils have a good understanding of the use of ICT beyond the school, giving examples of where certain applications might be used and explaining the advantages of using ICT. Teachers' assessment at the end of Year 9 in 2004 showed that



standards were above the national average, but these assessments did not include the control element.

63. In the 2004 GNVQ course a high proportion of the pupils entered gained a pass grade, of whom 14 gaining a merit. Although there are no national statistics for comparison these results are high. Achievement in the ICT GNVQ groups is good, with pupils using the skills they acquired in Years 7 to 9 to develop their assignments. Pupils of all ability, including those with special educational needs, make good progress throughout school.
64. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use their expertise well to guide pupils to develop their understanding. Teachers make effective use of the guidelines of the National ICT Strategy for the planning of lessons. This approach ensures good progression, successfully building on pupils' previous knowledge. Regular assessment procedures ensure that all pupils know the levels they are achieving. Helpful comments from teachers show them how to improve. The particular strengths of the teaching are the very good management of pupils, teachers' high expectations and the positive relationships between pupils and teachers, all contributing to a learning ethos where pupils are confident to seek help when needed. Teaching is less effective when prior knowledge has not been taken into account, resulting in pupils becoming restless, unsure of the task and slowing learning.
65. The leadership and management of the subject are good with a clear vision about the future developments of the subject. The subject co-ordinator has an awareness of the department's weaknesses and has put into place clear strategies to maintain and raise standards. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good.

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

66. At the previous inspection the use of ICT in the curriculum to support pupils' learning was varied and inconsistent. Since then there has been a considerable investment in ICT with increased resources and hardware. Consequently the use of ICT in subjects across the curriculum has shown a significant improvement. The majority of subjects have now identified in their schemes of work how ICT can be used to effectively support pupils' learning. The most effective use of ICT has been with the interactive whiteboards that are being used by an increasing number of teachers, contributing positively to the pace of lessons and pupils' learning. Since the previous inspection the school intranet has been developed and is being used by departments to support pupils' progress.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **History**

Provision in history is **very good**.

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

- The quality of teaching is very good and often excellent.
- Pupils display excellent attitudes to learning.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- There is excellent use of display in classrooms and in corridors.
- The department has made very good progress since the previous inspection.

### **Commentary**

67. Evidence from lessons seen and an analysis of pupils' work indicate standards are in line with those expected by the end of Year 9. This represents good achievement because many pupils enter the school with low levels of subject knowledge. During their first three years at the school, all pupils develop a good understanding of historical methods. Higher attaining pupils

have good opportunities to develop their historical skills in depth and the achievement of lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, matches that of their peers.

68. In recent GCSE examinations, the uptake of pupils studying history has been very high and results have been average, although the achievement of boys was low in the most recent examination. Standards as seen in the current Years 10 and 11 are above national norms. Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is good.
69. The quality of teaching is very good overall and it is often excellent. The previous inspection report expressed concerns about lack of variety and low expectations in teaching and learning. These issues have been fully addressed and teachers use their subject skills very well to promote very good learning. They have very high expectations of all pupils so that they are encouraged to become budding historians. All pupils are fully involved in lesson activities and teachers use a very wide range of methods to stimulate pupils and engage their interest. These include video, role-play, group work and class discussions. There is, above all, a sense of purpose and enjoyment in lessons. As a result, pupils respond with enthusiasm to teachers' expectations and display excellent attitudes to their learning.
70. The department is led and managed very well. Marking is thorough and gives pupils a clear idea of their progress. ICT is used well as a teaching and learning tool and the department's work is enhanced considerably by the excellent use of display both in classrooms and in corridors. Overall, the department has made very good progress since the previous inspection and is now a very popular subject within the school. There is a very dedicated and enthusiastic teaching team in place with the undoubted ability to build on its many strengths.

## **Geography**

Provision in geography is **unsatisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards of work have improved since the previous inspection but remain below the national average.
- Departmental self-evaluation does not identify areas or strategies for improvement.
- Well-planned fieldwork helps pupils develop skills of recording and analysis.
- The scheme of work does not meet the interests and learning needs of pupils in Years 7 to 9.
- The analysis of pupils' progress in geography does not make effective use of the performance data provided by the school.

### **Commentary**

71. Standards of work are unsatisfactory and pupils perform less well in geography than in most other subjects. Pupils enter the school with limited geography skills and some have problems with reading and writing. The progress made in Year 7 is unsatisfactory. Pupils only have a single lesson each week and the scheme of work does not include sufficient short, interesting topics needed to maintain pupil interest and progress. Time allocations and standards improve from Year 8 but teacher assessments in 2004 placed standards below national expectations by Year 9. Work scrutiny confirms this below average standard for current pupils, whose achievement is unsatisfactory. The pupils accurately record lesson content but do not explain links between factors or make comparisons with other places. This is partly due to their underdeveloped skills at providing written explanations and justifications for their ideas. Pupils with special educational needs make the same progress as others.
72. Standards at GCSE are higher than at the previous inspection, but remain firmly below the national average. Underdeveloped writing skills continue to limit the degree to which pupils explain links and provide evidence for their opinions. The department supports pupils with the writing tasks, but at time this support is over prescriptive and this acts as a barrier to developing independent study skills by the higher achieving pupils.

73. Pupils bring very positive attitudes to learning to lessons, which means that they make the most of teaching and homework opportunities. This contributes significantly to the satisfactory progress made in lessons from Year 8 onwards. However, their achievement by the end of Years 9 and 11 is unsatisfactory and standards are not high enough.
74. Overall and over time teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. Pupils are not enthusiastic about geography and few choose it as a GCSE option. Good learning was evident when teachers had planned precise learning objectives and divided lessons into clear steps. Pupils responded well when teaching was enthusiastic, but most lessons do not build on their willingness to contribute ideas and explore issues. Teachers' use of computers is of variable quality, but the inclusion of diagrams and pictures make some lessons interesting and effective. Overall, the pace of work is too slow and pupils do not make sufficient gains in the knowledge and understanding of geographical concepts.
75. During the inspection learning in many lessons was largely satisfactory, but the marking generally is not sufficiently detailed to help pupils improve. Teachers do not systematically correct or comment on grammatical and spelling errors, particularly in Years 7 to 9. There is little use of progress targets, so pupils do not understand how to become better at learning geography. There is no systematic teaching of language structures and many answers fail to provide key points supported by geographical evidence and evaluative comments. The situation is better in the new GCSE course because high quality textbooks encourage pupils to recognise connections between processes and outcomes.
76. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Improvements in standards and the effectiveness of teaching since the previous inspection have been limited. Departmental evaluation overestimates the quality of provision and does not sufficiently identify areas for improvement. Consequently, the geography improvement plan lacks detail and clear enough progress goals. The department does not systematically use pupils' performance to review and adjust teaching styles and course content to meet their needs.

## **Religious education**

Provision in religious education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The quality of teaching is very good.
- Pupils have excellent attitudes to their work.
- The department is led and managed very well.
- Shortage of time in Years 7 to 9 precludes an in-depth coverage of the locally agreed syllabus.
- There is excellent use of ICT and the school intranet.
- The subject makes a very important contribution to the personal development of all pupils.

### **Commentary**

77. Standards seen during the inspection are in line with those expected by the locally agreed syllabus by the end of Year 9. This represents good achievement as many pupils enter the school with low levels of literacy skills and subject knowledge. From Year 7 onwards, pupils acquire a good understanding of Christianity and, in this context, some very good work was seen from Year 8 pupils on modern interpretations of miracles and parables from the Bible. Higher attaining pupils, however, lack depth in their writing and a major contributory factor to this is the low time allocation for the subject at this stage. However, the school has implemented plans to address this issue in the near future. Lower attaining pupils, and those with special educational needs, are supported well in class and there is a commendable emphasis on raising standards of literacy.

78. In recent GCSE examinations, results have fluctuated at or below national expectations. In the current Years 10 and 11, however, standards are above national expectations and pupils following the full course GCSE develop their subject skills to considerable depth, for example, in some very detailed extended writing from Year 10 pupils on moral issues, such as euthanasia. There is at present no provision of religious education for all pupils at this stage, but this situation is to be remedied in the immediate future.
79. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. The specialist teacher uses subject knowledge skills very well to enthuse and motivate pupils and is ably supported by another member of the humanities staff. Lessons are planned meticulously with very clear aims and objectives that are shared fully with pupils. Classroom organisation is very strong and all pupils are fully involved in lively debates, group work activities and role-play. Above all, there is very strong rapport in the classroom and a sense of mutual respect in lessons. As a result, pupils show excellent attitudes to work and to each other.
80. The department is led and managed very well. The previous inspection report raised concerns about levels of literacy and the shortage of textbooks. These issues have been addressed and artefacts are used particularly well in the department. Marking is thorough, but the use of levels to monitor pupils' progress is still at an early stage of development. The subject makes a very important contribution to the personal development of all pupils. There is also excellent use of ICT and the school intranet as teaching and learning tools. Overall, good progress has been made since the previous inspection. This is a vibrant and very well managed department with clear plans for future development. The key issues of more curriculum time in Years 7 to 9 and the provision of religious education for all in Years 10 and 11 have now been addressed, but there is a need for more specialist staffing as a result of these changes.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

### **Design and technology**

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

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

- Standards in resistant materials and graphic products are above average by the end of Year 11 because of the well-planned provision.
- Achievement in all material areas is good because of teachers' good subject knowledge and pupils' positive attitudes to learning.
- Planning and assessment in Years 7 to 9 do not build effectively on learning from previous units of work.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they receive very good support from teachers and teaching assistants.
- Limited access to a range of ICT facilities hinders opportunities for pupils to gain higher grades.

#### **Commentary**

81. Pupils start school with variable experiences in design and technology and overall standards are below those expected for their age. In 2004 teacher assessments indicate below average standards by the end of Year 9. Individual modules of the current work are well planned so pupils' achievement is good and standards in Years 7 and 8 are broadly average. However, the lack of joint planning and shared assessment means pupils do not build on learning effectively from one unit to another so standards seen in Year 9 are below average. In Years 7 to 9 pupils have good opportunities to use a variety of tools, equipment and materials and develop a range of good practical and design skills. Pupils' achievement from Year 7 to 9 is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs also make satisfactory progress.
82. In 2004 standards at GCSE were above average overall. Standards in food were well below average because of staffing difficulties. However, improvement in staffing and planning means

that standards are now improving. In Years 10 and 11 progress and achievement are good with pupils extending their understanding of the design and making processes and applying them effectively to develop their chosen projects. This is seen particularly in resistant materials, graphics and electronics where achievement is often very good with above average standards in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress with many pupils achieving better than expected. ICT skills are competent, but limited access to computer aided design facilities hinders pupils' opportunities to develop coursework and gain higher grades.

83. Overall, teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well prepared with a good range of well-structured tasks that enable pupils to consolidate and extend their skills and knowledge. Teachers share their very good subject knowledge effectively with pupils to develop their understanding and application of different processes. Pupils are clear about the purpose of the lessons, but the use of questioning to probe pupils' depth of understanding and the identification of what they have achieved by the end of the lesson is inconsistent across the department. Relationships and very good attitudes create a productive and safe working environment. Very good individual support from teachers and learning support staff enables pupils, particularly lower attaining and special educational needs pupils, to learn effectively and make good progress.
84. Leadership is very good. The head of department has a very good understanding of design and technology that is shared by a team of hardworking staff to deliver the subject effectively. He has a very good view of the strengths and weaknesses of the department and an exciting vision for the development of the subject in the future. Management is good. A number of strategies have been successfully implemented so that improvement since the previous inspection is good. Data is analysed well to monitor pupils' achievement, but aspects of teaching and learning are not monitored formally enough to ensure consistency across the department.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

### **Art and design**

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

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

- Standards are rising year by year.
- Leadership and management are good and there is a sense of purpose and high aspiration.
- There is a very good equality of opportunity for all pupils.
- The accommodation is too cramped in one of the rooms provided for the subject.

#### **Commentary**

85. On entry to the school pupils' standards in art and design are below average. Supported by good teaching and learning the current Year 9 pupils are achieving well and attaining the expected standards. Since the subject leader was appointed GCSE examination results have improved yearly and in 2004 results were just below average. This was a good improvement on the previous year results that were well below average. In 2004 boys achieved better than girls. Inspection evidence indicates a further improvement in standards and the current Year 11 pupils are now attaining average standards. Across the school, girls and boys achieve equally well and show good attitudes to their work. A wide range of activities are provided for pupils to raise their standards. These include opportunities to work during lunchtimes and after school when some staff provide pupils with one-to-one tuition. All pupils are given good support and teachers ensure they all have good opportunities to achieve well.
86. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Pupils' work is evaluated well and every encouragement is given to pupils to try their best. There are good schemes of work

interpreted well into lesson planning. Assessment and marking are good. Targets are shared with the pupils and they are clear what they need to do to improve. They talk highly of the subject and the good quality of teaching they receive.

87. Through the good leadership and management of the subject leader there is a good team approach and a very good sense of purpose and high aspirations. Performance data is monitored well and there is a very good review of the patterns emerging supported by the relevant action taken to raise standards. Good use of ICT is made. The accommodation in one of the two art rooms is too narrow and cramped for the number of pupils who use it. There has been a good improvement since the previous inspection where the standards of work and the quality of the curriculum have improved.

## **Music**

Provision in music is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' good rhythmic skills contribute positively to their performance.
- The range of extra-curricular ensembles provides challenging activities for the musically talented pupils.
- Pupils achieve well because of good quality teaching.
- The use of ICT to support pupils' composing skills in Years 7 to 9 are unsatisfactory.

### **Commentary**

88. The teachers' assessment of pupils at the end of Year 9 in 2004 indicated that standards were above the national average. In the 2004 GCSE music examination all the pupils entered achieved the higher grades of A-C. The numbers are too few to make a national comparison.
89. Pupils join the school in Year 7 with skills that are below the expected level and have had a varied musical experience in their primary schools. In particular, the creative element of their work is under-developed and many have had limited opportunities to compose and perform their own compositions. However, with the emphasis on developing performing skills pupils make good progress, reach the expected level by Year 9 and achieve well. Although pupils have an understanding of the elements of music and how to structure a composition, their creative work overall is not as well developed as performance. A contributory reason for this is that there are no facilities on keyboards for pupils to record and save their work for future development. Consequently, time is spent recapturing their previous work, slowing their overall creative development.
90. The good achievement continues and pupils in the Year 11 GCSE group are above the level expected at this point in the academic year. The majority of pupils are competent and confident instrumentalists and successfully use these skills to support their overall creative development. Pupils have produced compositions in varying styles that are harmonically correct and show a clear structure and originality.
91. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers are accomplished musicians, using their expertise effectively to demonstrate styles of music, advising pupils how to improve their work contributing positively to their learning. A particular strength of the teaching is the starter activities. The planning of lessons is good with styles and choice of music that appeal to pupils. When pupils have a clear understanding of the practical tasks they settle promptly to the activity. There are, however, occasions when they quickly complete the task and are left too long before teachers intervene to move to the next phase of learning and their progress is slowed. Although lessons conclude with sessions for pupils to perform they are often rushed with limited opportunities to appraise the work of others.

92. The leadership and management of the subject overall are good. There is a clear understanding about the future development of the subject and an awareness of the areas that need improvement. Assessment procedures are in their infancy and yet to have an impact on standards. Pupils are not aware of the levels they are achieving and ways to improve. Although the use of ICT music programs is effectively supporting pupils creative development in Years 10 and 11 the use in Years 7 to 9 are unsatisfactory. This is mainly due to the lack of overall resources and planning in the schemes of work. The range of extra-curricular ensembles is successfully providing challenging activities for musically talented pupils. Improvement since the previous inspection is good.

### **Drama**

93. The work in drama was sampled. GCSE results in 2004 were well above the national average with a very high proportion of pupils attaining the highest grades. These very good results have been maintained since the time of the previous inspection. Standards reached by pupils at the end of the course are very high, representing excellent achievement. Many pupils have excellent performance skills with successful exploration of emotions in character being a particularly strong feature. In ensemble work they show excellent teamwork. They assess their own work and that of others very perceptively and give each other advice very sensitively.
94. Teaching and learning in the three lessons seen was very good. They are characterised by high expectations, thorough attention to detail, expert management of lessons and excellent relationships. Pupils and teachers work exceptionally hard.
95. The subject is very well managed and led. Courses are very well planned. There is a very clear focus on raising standards as high as possible as is seen in the present fast-track group aiming at GCSE in Year 10. So far this initiative is proving very successful. Drama is very popular among pupils and a far higher proportion chooses to follow the GCSE course than in most schools. The subject makes a great contribution to the life of the school with regular and much-admired productions and contacts with a local theatre and other local arts organisations. The department has improved further on the very good provision described in the previous report and is now excellent.

### **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

Provision in physical education is **good**.

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

- GCSE examination results are well above the national average.
- The leadership and management of the department are very good.
- Very good relationships and good lesson management ensure that pupils have a very positive attitude towards the subject.
- A wide range of extra-curricular activities on offer, are well supported by enthusiastic groups of pupils.

#### **Commentary**

96. Standards by the end of Year 9 are in line with those attained nationally. This represents good achievement by the pupils, some of whom have limited physical education experiences and skills when they arrive from their primary schools. Pupils perform well in a wide range of activities. In games they demonstrate good ball control and are aware of simple attack and defence strategies and are acquiring the skills to enable them to compete successfully. Their ability to analyse their own and each other's performances contributes to the improvement of their skills.
97. Pupils, other than those taking the GCSE examination course, continue to make good progress during Years 10 and 11 and by the time they are at the end of Year 11 their

attainment is in line with that seen nationally, with a significant number doing even better. Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is good.

98. At the time of the previous inspection the number of pupils gaining the higher grades in the GCSE examination was below the national average. During the last three years the results have improved considerably and in the 2004 examination the number of pupils gaining the higher grades was well above that gained nationally. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils in the current course are performing at least as well. Pupils studying for GCSE attain well above average standards in their practical work, but some pupils have poor literacy skills that inhibit standards in the theory aspects of the examination. Achievement by pupils taking the examination course is good.
99. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and are well integrated into lessons, with tasks and equipment that are adjusted to meet their particular needs. Talented pupils are identified and are encouraged to extend their skills both in school and with outside clubs. Many pupils have represented Havering and Essex in a range of sporting activities, and a few have gone on to gain national recognition.
100. Teaching and learning are good overall, and in many lessons very good. Lessons are well prepared and content is well matched to pupils' interest and ability. Teachers continually make demands for high quality performance and good behaviour and invariably these demands are met. Pupils respond very positively and are highly motivated. Their enjoyment of their lessons is very evident.
101. This is a very well led and managed department that promotes high standards and makes a positive contribution towards raising pupils' levels of physical fitness and confidence. Very good leadership by the head of department, who has been appointed since the previous inspection, has ensured rapid progress in all aspects of the department's work. Comprehensive assessment procedures help in teaching the subject. There is a very extensive programme of extra-curricular activities on offer, which is very well supported. Hard working teachers work well together, support each other and show a very strong commitment to their pupils. In January 2004 the school gained the Sportsmark award. This is national recognition of high quality provision in physical education. There has been very good improvement since the previous inspection. Examination results have improved significantly and the overall standard of teaching and learning have improved.

## **BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES**

### **Business studies**

102. The work in business studies was sampled. Standards at GCSE in 2004 were below the national average, but have significantly improved since 2003. Standards of work seen in folders and the two lessons observed are below average, but achievement is satisfactory with some examples of good achievement. Pupils enter Year 10 with no previous experience in business studies, but throughout the course they develop good knowledge of business organizations and the economic implications of business decisions. However, pupils' use of business language in coursework is underdeveloped and this coupled with insufficient depth of understanding of business concepts and how to apply them effectively to a range of business situations results in below average standards
103. During the inspection lessons were taught by a supply teacher. Teaching and learning observed were good with well-planned lessons offering good opportunities for pupils to work well together to explore ideas and gain a better understanding of the tasks undertaken. Very good subject knowledge was shared effectively with pupils encouraging them to take responsibility for planning and organizing their revision. Short focused tasks maintained good levels of involvement and concentration. Pupils interviewed indicated good levels of satisfaction with the course. They enjoyed the syllabus content and appreciate its relevance to their future life.



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

104. Personal, social and health education is well planned to ensure that all relevant areas are covered. It is taught as a distinct lesson and also in subjects across the curriculum. In lessons seen pupils' standards were above expectations and they achieved well. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Coverage of the course is ensured through the good monitoring by the five pastoral heads and a working party. Curriculum planning is thorough and there is an interesting and relevant programme of study. This programme has a good emphasis on pupils' personal development, how to behave and conduct themselves and impacts very well on the pupils' very good attitudes, their relationships and their desire to learn. Statutory requirements for sex and relationships education, drugs education and careers education and guidance are well met.

### **Citizenship**

Provision in citizenship is **unsatisfactory**.

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

- The recently appointed co-ordinator has a good vision for further development.
- The subject is not yet assessed.
- The subject is not reported to parents.
- The full programme of study is not taught.

### **Commentary**

105. Citizenship is mainly taught through subjects. It was not possible to see any lessons during the inspection. The few subjects that had planned to teach the subject were not covering a relevant programme for citizenship. Most were continuing to teach further aspects of the personal, social and health education programme. Therefore, it is not possible to judge standards, achievement and the quality of teaching and learning.

106. Management of citizenship by the school is unsatisfactory. The newly appointed co-ordinator has put into place a relevant outline and development plan for the study of the subject. To date her leadership has been good. She is fully aware of what is needed to develop citizenship. However, the release time given for her to manage the subject on one period a week is not sufficient. She has not been able to train staff or to monitor and evaluate provision across the school. There are no procedures in place for assessing the subject. The responsibility for teaching the subject has been passed to subject teachers in the departments across the school. Most show a great deal of uncertainty regarding the three strands of the programme of study. Two aspects of the programme, skills of enquiry and communication and skills of participation and responsible action are generally covered well through the good personal, social and health education programme and the very good pastoral support pupils receive and the good opportunities for enrichment. These do much to ensure the pupils are good responsible citizens. The part of the programme dealing with the knowledge and understanding about becoming informed citizens is under developed and most teachers are unsure regarding its content. There are few resources to support its delivery and no financial allocation is at present made to the subject. Schemes of work are under-developed and do not cover in sufficient depth the three strands of study. The subject is not yet reported to parents and does not meet the statutory requirement to report in the annual written report to parents from August 2002. The subject was not taught at the time of the previous inspection.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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