

INSPECTION REPORT

HACKNEY FREE & PAROCHIAL SCHOOL

Hackney

LEA area: Hackney

Unique reference number: 100284

Headteacher: Mrs J Barnes

Reporting inspector: John Godwood
18242

Dates of inspection: 4 – 7 March 2002

Inspection number: 199543

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	11-16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Paragon Road Hackney London
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R Jenkins
Date of previous inspection:	13 October 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
18242	John Godwood	Registered inspector		What sort of school is it? How high are standards; the school's results and pupils' achievements? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9646	Geraldine Osment	Lay inspector		How high are standards; pupils' attitudes, values and personal development? How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
2740	Betty Barratt	Team inspector	History	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
23528	Andrew Bird	Team inspector	Mathematics	
22590	Robert Castle	Team inspector	Geography	
22042	John Challands	Team inspector	Physical education	
27666	John Dockrell	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
2597	Cheryl Jackson	Team inspector	Special educational needs Equal opportunities	
7428	Ray Jardine	Team inspector	Science	
12003	Andrew Marfleet	Team inspector	English	
10288	John Richards	Team inspector	Design and technology	
30128	Shirley Stanley	Team inspector	Music	
18636	Chris Shaw	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Art	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Hackney Free and Parochial Church of England School is a voluntary aided comprehensive school of below average size, with 746 students aged 11 to 16. There are more boys than girls. The school is over-subscribed. Many students come from areas of significant deprivation. Three-quarters are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Most of these are Black Caribbean or Black African, but one fifth are refugees, predominantly from Turkey, and a small number are from Asian backgrounds. More than a third of students have English as an additional language, though only two are at an early stage of learning English. Almost half are eligible for free school meals, which is well above average. Three hundred and thirty students have special educational needs. Forty-three of these have statements, which is well above average. Of 78 students with more significant special needs, 17 have emotional and behavioural difficulties, one is autistic, nine have communication difficulties and the rest have learning difficulties. The school has significant difficulties recruiting teachers, particularly in science, but also in English, French, design and technology, history, physical education and special educational needs. Students' attainment on entry to the school is well below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Hackney Free and Parochial School provides a sound education, with clear signs of improvement. Students' achievements in relation to their prior attainment are satisfactory and often good; expectations of what they can achieve are rising. Teaching is satisfactory. There is much good teaching, but teachers are not all consistent in what they expect of students. The leadership of the new headteacher is very good. She has clearly identified the areas for improvement and is effectively raising expectations. Day-to-day financial management is good, but school finances have not been managed strategically and the school does not currently give satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Students achieve well in English and the skills they gain support their progress in other subjects.
- Teachers' care for individual students leads to good relationships and good social development.
- The school promotes equal opportunities and students from all backgrounds achieve equally and get on well together.
- There are good opportunities for students' personal development. These occur in some lessons, in many opportunities for students to take responsibility and in the care provided by the school.
- The new headteacher is very effectively raising expectations and creating an ethos of achievement.

What could be improved

- The number of students who gain GCSE and other qualifications.
- Attendance and punctuality in Years 10 and 11.
- The sharing of good practice in teaching, in order to create more consistency in the expectations that teachers have of students' work and behaviour.
- The use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support teaching and learning of other subjects.
- The strategic management of school finances.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in October 1997. Since then standards have improved at a similar rate to the national trend. There has been a steady improvement in most GCSE results, but not in the number of students gaining five or more GCSE passes. There has been some improvement in teaching. Satisfactory progress has been made on most of the key issues raised in last report. There has been good improvement in students' behaviour, particularly in corridors and on staircases. Not enough improvement has been made in the provision for spiritual development. Overall, the school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved at the end of Year 11 based on average point scores in GCSE examinations.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
GCSE examinations	E*	E	E	C

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Standards in Year 9 National Curriculum tests in 2001 were well below average, though students' achievements were satisfactory in relation to their attainment on entry to the school. The rate of improvement over the last five years has been in line with the national trend. Results in English and mathematics were better than in science, where they were very low.

GCSE results in 2001 were well below average, but were in line with similar schools. Standards have risen at a similar rate to the national trend and results in 2001 were the best yet. Students achieved well in English, but their achievement was unsatisfactory in science. There is underachievement in the proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE passes and in the number of students leaving school with no qualifications. The school did not meet its GCSE target in 2001. The target for 2002 is similar and is challenging, but realistic.

In work seen, standards at the end of Year 9 are well below average in English, mathematics and science. They are below average in all other subjects except in physical education, where they are average. At the end of Year 11 standards are well below average overall. They are well below average in mathematics, science and ICT. They are better than that, but still below average in English, French, design and technology, history, geography, music and art. Standards are average in physical education. There are no significant differences in the standards reached by students from different ethnic backgrounds.

Students' achievements in the progress they make from Year 7 to 11 are satisfactory overall, and often good. Students achieve well in English, French, geography, history, music and art. Their achievements are unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11 in science.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory. Many students respond well in lessons and are keen to take part in activities, but too many fail to attend in Years 10 and 11.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Students behave well in most lessons. They are sometimes boisterous outside lessons, but generally good-natured. Bullying is rare.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Students from all backgrounds get on well together and relationships with most teachers are good.
Attendance	Poor. Attendance has improved in Years 7 to 9, where it is satisfactory. It remains well below average in Years 10 and 11.

Students have many opportunities to take responsibility and they respond well to these. They work well together and also take on leadership roles. Older students do some admirable work with primary school pupils. Attendance and punctuality are a concern and are being taken seriously by the school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11
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Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
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Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

Teaching is good in English throughout the school. It is satisfactory in mathematics. In science, teaching is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11, partly because of difficulties in recruiting staff. Teaching is at least satisfactory in all other subjects. It is good in French, design and technology, geography, history and art. In Years 7 to 9, it is good in ICT and in Years 10 and 11 it is good in music.

Teachers have good subject knowledge and give clear explanations. They usually manage students well and show a good level of care for individual students, establishing good relationships. They are not all consistent in their expectations of students. Teaching methods often lack variety and do not give students enough opportunities to learn actively. There is not enough use of ICT in most subjects. Literacy and numeracy are taught satisfactorily, though the school has made more developments in literacy. The school has a positive approach to equal opportunities and meets the needs of all its students satisfactorily. However, teachers' planning does not always take enough account of students with special educational needs. Most students are co-operative in lessons and keen to learn.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The curriculum provides equal opportunities for all students, but is not relevant enough in Years 10 and 11, because there are no work-related courses.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. The quality of withdrawal sessions is good and there is good individual support, but not enough additional support in lessons.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. Students at an early stage of learning English and those who are becoming confident users are given the right support. They make satisfactory progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. There are very good opportunities for social development and many opportunities to take responsibility. Provision for moral and cultural development is good. Provision for spiritual development is unsatisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The level of care is very good. There are good procedures to promote good behaviour and satisfactory procedures to promote attendance.

The school provides parents with good information about students' progress and there is a satisfactory and improving partnership with parents.

Planning is well advanced to improve the relevance of the curriculum in Years 10 and 11. However, most subjects do not make enough use of ICT. Personal and careers education is very good. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities and additional study support. Links with primary schools are strong. Gifted and talented students benefit from some good additional opportunities.

There are satisfactory assessment procedures and good procedures for monitoring students' academic progress. Parents appreciate the target-setting meetings and learning mentors provide individual students with effective support in reaching their full potential.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and manage-	Good. The new headteacher provides very good leadership. She has

ment by the headteacher and other key staff	identified the most important areas for development and is raising standards. She is well supported by the senior management team.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors are supportive and maintain good links with the school. They give good moral support to many areas but are not sufficiently challenging in holding the school to account.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Monitoring of teaching is well established, though it does not always lead to sharing of good practice. Examination results are analysed but do not show the progress made by different groups.
The strategic use of resources	Unsatisfactory. The budget has been in deficit for a year and strategic action has not been taken to rectify this. Day-to-day management of finances is good.

The match of staff qualifications to the subjects they teach is satisfactory overall, despite serious recruitment difficulties in science and several other subjects. Accommodation is good and the level of learning resources satisfactory, though there are not enough computers and some constraints in physical education.

The reforms implemented by the new headteacher have the support of the staff and most parents. Many departments are well managed and while there are weaknesses in the management of a few areas of the school, most staff are motivated and the capacity for improving the school is good.

Best value principles are implemented to a satisfactory degree, though the school has not analysed whether it is giving best value in relation to its expenditure on staffing.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most children like school. • Children are expected to work hard and achieve their best. • The school helps children become mature and responsible. • Activities outside lessons, including extra-curricular activities, after-school study support and early GCSE entry. • The school is well led and is improving under the new head. • Students with special educational needs receive good support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents don't feel well informed about progress. • Expectations of behaviour are not consistent and some teachers do not treat students with respect. • Some parents do not feel enough is expected of students. • Not enough homework is set after Year 7. • Parents do not always get an adequate response to their concerns. • Students are sometimes sent home without parents being informed.

Inspectors agree with most of parents' positive views, though some improvements are needed in special educational needs support. The inspection found that the information provided on progress through reports, parents' evenings and target-setting days is good. There is some inconsistency in the standards of behaviour expected by different teachers. The expectations of what students can achieve have in some subjects been too low but are now being raised by the new headteacher. Homework is in most cases set appropriately and there are good procedures for monitoring this. The new headteacher goes to considerable lengths to ensure parents' concerns are dealt with and there are good procedures for informing parents before students are sent out of school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Students' attainment on entry to the school is well below average overall, though there are a significant number of students in each year group whose attainment is average or above average. Standards reached by the end of Year 9 and by the end of Year 11 are also well below average, though students' achievements in relation to their prior attainment are satisfactory and often good. The expectations that teachers have of what students can achieve are rising.
2. Results in Year 9 National Curriculum tests in 2001 were well below average in English and mathematics and very low in science. The lower results in science are partly due to the school's significant difficulties in recruiting permanent, qualified science teachers. The trend of improvement over the last five years has been in line with the national trend. In English, girls generally do better than boys by a similar margin to that found nationally. Girls also do better than boys in mathematics, which is not the case nationally. Girls and boys achieve equally in science.
3. In work seen during the inspection, standards at the end of Year 9 are well below average in English, mathematics and science. They are below average in all other subjects except in physical education, where they are average. Students' achievements in relation to their prior attainment on entry to the school are satisfactory overall and good in many subjects. Students achieve well in English, French, geography, history, ICT, music and art.
4. GCSE results in 2001 were well below average, though they were in line with the results of similar schools. GCSE results have improved each year since 1999 and the results in 2001 were the best the school has had. The trend of improvement is broadly similar to the national trend. English results were above similar schools, but science results were below similar schools. Girls generally do better than boys, though the difference is less than that found nationally. There are some particular weaknesses in the GCSE results. The proportion of students gaining five or more GCSEs is very low in comparison with the national figure. This is partly due to a policy in many subjects of withdrawing students from the examination if their work or attendance is poor. The proportion of students who leave with no qualifications is well above average. This is partly because attendance is poor in Years 10 and 11 and because the curriculum is not well suited to the needs of all students.
5. In work seen during the inspection, standards at the end of Year 11 are well below average overall. They are well below average in mathematics, science and ICT. They are better than that, but still below average in English, French, design and technology, history, geography, music and art. Standards are average in physical education.
6. Students' achievements in Years 10 and 11 in relation to their attainment at the end of Year 9 are satisfactory overall. They are good in English, French, geography, history, music and art because teaching is good in these subjects. They are unsatisfactory in science for several reasons, including an unsuitable curriculum, some unsatisfactory teaching and weak leadership. While achievement in many subjects is good, it is less good in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 7 to 9.
7. The school did not achieve its GCSE targets in 2001. The targets for 2002 are similar and are challenging, but realistic. In many subjects, teachers have in the past set relatively low targets for what students can achieve and teachers' assessments in Year 9 in 2001 were significantly lower than students' test results. The new headteacher has met each head of department to challenge the targets they have set and encourage them to raise them. This has successfully begun to raise expectations of what students can achieve. The headteacher has also introduced a policy that all students will be entered for a full range of GCSE examinations, with the intention of increasing the number of students who leave with qualifications. In the longer term,

she intends to raise standards through making the curriculum more relevant and improving attendance. There are clear signs that this emphasis on achievement is beginning to lead to rising standards, especially in Years 7 to 9. In several subjects, the standard of work seen in the inspection is higher than in recent examination results.

8. Students with special educational needs make satisfactory progress across the school, and those who are withdrawn for extra support achieve well. The majority of students who are withdrawn make significant progress in improving their reading and spelling ages. The work they are set in small group sessions is carefully matched to their learning needs and their progress is assessed carefully. They are given positive support by other students and by their teachers.
9. Gifted and talented students make satisfactory progress. They benefit from opportunities in the curriculum to take some GCSEs early, including English and mathematics. For students who have taken GCSEs early, the school offers additional courses, though students' further progress suffers from the fact that the timetable arrangements for these are not well worked out. Higher-attaining students underachieve in science because they are not fully challenged. In a new project funded by Excellence in Cities, gifted and talented students have been identified and are beginning to be given many more opportunities to develop their abilities.
10. The achievement of the students who speak English as an additional language is satisfactory overall, and there are areas of strength – for example in English. In general, the standards they reach are not significantly different from the standards of students in the school as a whole. Students from different groups – including those at different stages of learning English and those who speak different languages – all make satisfactory progress. Where appropriate, they are also given the opportunity to take a GCSE in their first language and each year, several students of various ages achieve high grades.
11. The school and the Hackney Ethnic Minority Achievement Service do some analysis of the results gained by students from minority ethnic groups. This analysis is useful, but is not sufficiently analytical to give a clear picture of the progress made by different groups. The available analysis shows that in Year 9, Turkish students often do less well than English students in English and science. Students of African heritage do about as well as English students. Boys of Caribbean heritage tend to do less well than other boys, though this is not always the case. In the inspection there were no significant differences in the standards reached by different ethnic groups and students from all backgrounds were equally well supported and achieved equally well. Students from minority ethnic backgrounds benefit from the inclusive ethos of the school and from individual support through a well-organised mentoring programme.
12. Literacy skills are not high in the school. Students join the school with very low reading ages on average, and in some cases problems with literacy hold up their learning. They are well taught in English and the good progress that they make supports their learning of other subjects. Speaking and listening skills are better developed than reading or writing skills. Students are improving the accuracy of their English and are learning to write effectively at greater length. Spelling is a problem for many students.
13. High-attaining students in Years 7 to 9 have satisfactory numerical skills, but lower-attaining students rely heavily on the use of the calculator and do not know their tables. Students in Year 9 develop a satisfactory understanding of measurement and make good progress in handling data. Year 10 students can use algebra but do not use estimation to test their answers.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. Students have satisfactory attitudes to school and their work. Most students respond well in lessons and are keen to take part in activities but, in Years 10 and 11, too many fail to attend and the rate of attendance is poor. Good attitudes were observed in many lessons in all year groups. For example, in a very good Year 10 French lesson, students showed mature attitudes when assessing their own work and discussing how they needed to improve. In a Year 9 history lesson on the holocaust, students were very attentive and thought deeply about the

consequences of the event. In a minority of lessons, students display less positive attitudes. In a Year 10 English lesson, for example, students did not relate well to each other when discussing stories from their own cultures. Students are mostly positive about the school. They find most teachers friendly and helpful and feel they can approach members of staff if they have worries and concerns.

15. Students with special educational needs have good attitudes towards their work. When given individual support in lessons they generally concentrate well and show a commitment to improving their skills. There is trust between students with special educational needs and all staff at the school. Other students show supportive and helpful attitudes to students with special educational needs, particularly those with physical difficulties. Students who speak English as an additional language are confident enough to ask for help when they need it. They work hard and want to learn.
16. Behaviour is good overall and has improved since the last inspection. Most teachers manage students well and settle classes quickly. There are high expectations of behaviour in many lessons and, in these lessons, students generally learn well. For example, in a Year 8 ICT lesson, a challenging project ensured that students were quiet and businesslike in their approach to their work. In a brisk, well-structured history lesson, Year 7 students' behaviour was very good when studying the Black Death. Classroom posters with the slogan 'Disruptive Behaviour Steals Learning' remind students of the impact of negative actions on others. Some parents at the pre-inspection meeting were concerned that teachers were not consistent in their expectations of behaviour and that some teachers used inappropriate and humiliating language when disciplining students. The inspection found that in the majority of lessons, the management of behaviour is effective and appropriate, but there is some inconsistency in what teachers expect of students, and occasionally, teachers' methods of managing behaviour are not appropriate.
17. There is some boisterous behaviour at break and lunchtimes, but it is good-natured. No incidents of bullying or racism were observed during the inspection. Students said there is little bullying and most are confident that it is dealt with quickly and effectively when it does arise. Most students move around the school sensibly, although they are noisy and do not queue quietly outside classrooms. Sometimes there is fussing about removing coats and putting bags on the floor, with the result that students are not fully focused on learning at the start of lesson.
18. In the school year preceding the inspection there were four permanent exclusions and 118 fixed-term exclusions. This is a high number, which has increased since the last inspection. There is no significant pattern in the ethnic backgrounds of the students who were excluded, though the great majority were boys. The headteacher has put into place new procedures for dealing with poor behaviour, and these have resulted in a reduced number of exclusions since September.
19. Students' personal development is good, and has improved since the last inspection. The school provides well for this and students learn to work together and gain an understanding of their place in society. They are polite and deal well with visitors. Many are able to work successfully in groups. This was evident in a Year 9 English lesson, where students supported each other in constructing an essay on Macbeth. Students respond well to the many opportunities that they are offered to take responsibility in the school and sometimes in local primary schools. They support fundraising for local, national and international charities, including the Sanjae Lewis trust, World Aids Day and Macmillan Nurses.
20. Throughout the school, relationships are generally good. Students from all backgrounds get on well together and there is very good racial harmony. Relationships are improved by the good care and support that most teachers give to individual students. Many teachers foster positive attitudes. In a Year 7 mathematics lesson, for example, the teacher used praise well to ensure that students felt their contributions were valued. In physical education lessons, good relationships between students and teachers create a positive learning environment.

21. Attendance in the school year before the inspection was well below average and the level of unauthorised absence was well above average. Since September 2001, the headteacher has established more rigorous procedures to check on attendance. As a result, attendance has improved to a satisfactory level in Years 7 to 9, but it is still poor in Years 10 and 11. Some students lack a sense of urgency to get to their lessons, which sometimes start late as a result. The school is active in dealing with this issue and senior members of staff are always on patrol during lesson change-over times. There has been a satisfactory improvement in the school's procedures since the last inspection, but attendance remains a concern and the overall poor rate of attendance and punctuality is having an impact on standards of attainment, particularly in Years 10 and 11.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

22. Teaching is satisfactory and much of it is good. During the inspection, almost 19 out of every 20 lessons were satisfactory or better and half were good or better. One lesson in every eight was very good or better and occasionally teaching was excellent. There has been some improvement in teaching since the last inspection, with an increase in the proportion of lessons that are satisfactory or better.
23. Teaching is good in English and satisfactory in mathematics. In science, it is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9, but unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Teaching is good in French, design and technology, history, geography and art. It is satisfactory in physical education. In ICT, it is good in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. In music it is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11.
24. Teaching is affected by the difficulty the school has had in recruiting staff in some subjects. This is particularly the case in science, where the head of department post is a temporary appointment and there are three temporary or supply teachers. There are also temporary teachers filling vacancies in English, modern languages, design and technology, history, art, physical education and special educational needs. In some cases, such as in science, this is affecting standards, but generally temporary teachers are given good support and standards are being maintained. In art, students are achieving well under the guidance of the acting head of department and the temporary teacher. In English and French, students' current learning is still affected by staffing difficulties in previous years that are now largely resolved.
25. Typically, teachers have a good knowledge of their subject and often use this to plan carefully and give clear explanations. This characterises most English lessons. Some mathematics lessons are well planned but in others there is too much reliance on textbooks and worksheets and not enough focus on the concepts being learned. In science, new ideas are usually explained well and teachers have good subject knowledge, particularly of biology and chemistry. Art, music, ICT and geography teachers are knowledgeable and highly committed. In history also, students' learning benefits from teachers' clear introductions and well-structured lessons. In the good physical education lessons, teachers use their knowledge well to observe students' practical performance and intervene appropriately. Art teachers plan carefully and give students clear targets, which develop their confidence and self-discipline. The best design and technology lessons are also extremely well planned, with tasks that are appropriate for the full range of students.
26. Most teachers show a good level of care for individual students and their progress. In many subjects, including English, teachers offer additional support to students preparing for examinations, and students appreciate this. Art teachers give good support to individuals and make sure that students with special educational needs are given extra time. A strong feature of French teaching is the support and encouragement that teachers give, which builds students' confidence and self-esteem.
27. Where teaching is good, teachers use interesting methods that involve students in their learning, but where teaching is satisfactory, there is too much teacher talk and students are treated as passive learners. Group work is used well in English and teachers use resources

creatively to help students to structure their ideas. In the better mathematics lessons, teachers use challenging questions to deepen understanding, but in less good lessons students don't have enough opportunities to develop their thinking beyond the exercises they are set. Methods in science are sometimes inappropriate, with not enough practical work or group discussion. History students are helped to understand past events by methods that relate them to their own experiences, but they have very little opportunity to explore issues for themselves. In physical education, however, there are good opportunities to work independently and to take responsibility as coaches or officials. In music, appropriate practical activities challenge most students, though in Years 7 to 9, the higher attainers are not always stretched. Learning in most French lessons is enhanced by the teachers' use of French, but in a few lessons, too much English is used and listening skills are therefore weaker.

28. In the better lessons, teachers have high expectations of what students can achieve, but there are occasions when expectations are too low, and they are not consistent among all teachers. Mathematics teachers have high expectations of the higher-attaining students, but not of the average and low-attaining students. In the better science lessons, teachers have high expectations and challenge students to think, but in weaker lessons, expectations are low and students are not asked to explain their understanding. In art and geography, students respond to high expectations with interest and enthusiasm. French teachers manage students well and establish high expectations. Expectations are high in the best physical education lessons but in the weaker lessons, expectations are too low and the management of behaviour is ineffective.
29. In the less good teaching, a common weakness is that teaching methods and resources are not appropriate for the full range of ability in the class. This is the case in some mathematics and design and technology lessons and in the weaker geography lessons. It is also the case in some ICT lessons in Years 10 and 11, and leads to some students losing interest in the subject.
30. Assessment procedures are satisfactory, though in most subjects the results are not used enough to monitor students' progress and set targets for improvement. This is the case in science, French and history. Assessment is strong in English, where work is marked thoroughly and students know clearly the level that they have reached. In art also, students know how well they are doing and how to improve. Marking is regular in history and in French, where students assess their own work. In both these subjects, assessment is thorough but is not always based reliably on the National Curriculum levels. There are good assessment procedures in mathematics, but, as in science, marking is inconsistent and doesn't reliably inform students how to improve their work. Practical work is regularly assessed in physical education, though students rarely evaluate their own work. Marking of GCSE physical education theory work is unsatisfactory. Music students in Years 10 and 11 are given good feedback and respond well to this.
31. A common weakness in teaching is that many lessons are not drawn together with a review of what has been learned. In art, for example, lessons sometimes run on too long without a review and lower-attaining students become restless. Review sessions take place in mathematics, but don't include enough questioning to help students consolidate what they have learned. Homework is set regularly in most subjects and it appropriately extends classwork in, for example, English, science and French. It is set regularly in mathematics at an appropriate standard, but doesn't include extension work for the most able.
32. ICT is rarely used to support teaching and its use in learning subjects across the curriculum is unsatisfactory. Of the core subjects, only in English do students regularly use computers, mainly for word-processing, but also for research on the Internet. ICT is rarely used in art or mathematics. Science makes no use of ICT to collect data or to simulate scientific ideas. In design and technology, ICT is used in designing products and presenting work, but there are too few opportunities to use computer-aided design and manufacture. In geography, students have limited opportunities to use ICT for research and presentation, but they don't have enough computers to use in their GCSE work.

33. The teaching of literacy is satisfactory. It is well embedded in English lessons, but in other subjects the school has only just begun to implement its literacy policy. English lessons incorporate many of the features of the National Literacy Strategy and students' good progress supports their learning of other subjects. In other subjects, group discussion is not used as widely as it could be, even in history, geography and science. Opportunities are also missed in mathematics lessons, where students are often expected to listen to the teacher, and are not encouraged to develop their language skills through explaining their thinking. Writing for various audiences is practised in ICT lessons and to a lesser extent in the humanities, although not enough writing to record research is used in other subjects such as art. Some subjects support students' writing by giving them 'writing frames', but most do not. Opportunities for reading are limited outside English and history. In several subjects, teachers make an effort to explain new vocabulary, but although key words and technical vocabulary are given emphasis, their use is not practised regularly enough.
34. The teaching of numeracy is satisfactory, though the school is at a very early stage of developing a policy for this. In mathematics, the National Numeracy Strategy is not fully implemented and while attention is given to students' numeracy skills, it is not done consistently. There are sound plans to promote numeracy further. The application of numeracy in other subjects is better in Years 7 to 9 than in Years 10 and 11. In a good example of numeracy in English, data collected from students' surveys of language was accurately displayed in the form of pie charts and bar graphs for other students to interrogate. In a food technology lesson, students used number well when analysing the nutritional value of recipes and calculating cooking time from the weight of food. Geography and design and technology have numeracy policies included in their handbooks. However, departments often overlook opportunities for students to practise basic number work, use algebra or analyse data.
35. Students generally respond well in lessons, particularly when the teaching is good and they are well managed. In English, for example, they generally listen well and work well in groups. A minority of students are occasionally uncooperative, but the norm is a quiet working atmosphere. Students co-operate well in science, work safely and enjoy practical work. In French they work well in pairs and in GCSE classes they are able to work independently. Geography students respond well to their teachers' enthusiasm, though when planning occasionally fails to meet the needs of the full ability range, some students become frustrated. Most students enjoy ICT lessons, though there is some disaffection in Years 10 and 11. In physical education, students are enthusiastic and concentrate well. The achievement of students in many subjects in Years 10 and 11 is badly affected by the high level of absence. In design and technology, some GCSE students fail to take responsibility for their own work and don't do enough homework or independent research.
36. The teaching of students with special educational needs is satisfactory. In specialised withdrawal lessons it is good, and is generally very carefully targeted to students' individual needs. In subject lessons, however, the quality of planning for students with special educational needs lessons is variable. It is good in English, history and usually in geography. In some other subjects, work does not always accommodate students' special educational needs. This is the case in mathematics, science, ICT and design and technology.
37. Students with special educational needs receive some additional help in lessons from individual support teachers. Where this help is available, it is often well focused and helps students to make good progress. In general, however, students with special educational needs do not receive enough additional individual support in lessons and this affects their progress in many subjects, including English, French, geography, history, design and technology and ICT. The use of support teachers is sometimes not well planned in mathematics or science. The quality of support has been affected by rapid turnover of individual support teachers and the need for the department to keep training new temporary teachers.
38. The teaching of students with English as additional language is satisfactory overall, but there is a wide variation between different departments and individual teachers. The specialist instructor makes an important contribution to the learning of the students who are at early stages of

learning English. When classes have a support teacher as well as a subject teacher, the teaching is best when the support teacher takes part in planning and teaching the lesson, rather than just reacting to requests for help. The records of progress that students make in learning English and their specific next steps are not detailed enough.

39. The school meets the needs of all its students to a satisfactory degree. Teachers take seriously the school's aim to give all students equal opportunities and, in the main, all students progress as well as each other. There is no significant difference in the progress made by students from different ethnic groups. However, in some subjects there is not enough planning to meet the needs of students of different abilities in the class. In science particularly, higher-attaining students underachieve because they are not challenged sufficiently and lower-attaining students because the curriculum is not suitable for them.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?

40. The curriculum provides a satisfactory range of learning experiences. It is socially and educationally inclusive in that it seeks to educate the whole person and provide equal opportunities for all students.
41. In Years 7 to 9, in addition to the subjects of the National Curriculum, students follow courses in drama and personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE). Two classes in each year are 'fast-track' classes for higher-attaining students, and the other classes have students of mixed, but lower ability. The school has responded to a criticism in the last report by creating an extra class in each year and making the mixed ability classes smaller, but they still contain a very wide range of ability and some students need more support. Students have ICT lessons, but these are not provided throughout the year and, for some students, this creates a lack of continuity. More importantly, there are not enough opportunities to use ICT in other subjects.
42. Students in Years 10 and 11 follow GCSE courses in the National Curriculum subjects, and a non-examination course in PSHCE. All take French and double award science. Standards in French, science and ICT suffer from too little time being allocated to them in Years 10 and 11. The time allocated to physical education in all year groups is insufficient to provide enough depth to the subject. Optional courses include drama, business communication studies and statistics. While the curriculum offers appropriate breadth and balance overall in Years 10 and 11, its relevance to the interests of the students is significantly weakened because there are no work-related courses.
43. Higher-attaining students are offered additional flexibility by the opportunity to take GCSE English or mathematics early in Year 10 and then widen their learning experiences in Year 11 through courses in classical civilisation, statistics or ICT. The effectiveness of these courses is lessened, however, because the timetable arrangements have not been properly worked out. Lessons are taught at lunchtime or after school and students do additional study privately in the class of the subject they have dropped. For some lower-attaining students in English and French, a certificate of achievement is offered as an alternative to GCSE. A policy in many subjects is to withdraw students from GCSE entry if their work or attendance is poor. This is one reason for the very low proportion of students that gain five or more GCSEs.
44. The school is well aware of the shortcomings in the curriculum, and there are firm plans to make the curriculum broader and more relevant. Vocational GCSE courses in leisure and tourism and ICT are being introduced in September 2002, and these are to be followed by others in subjects where teachers have an interest in work-related education. The plans are guided by a firm intention to meet the interests, aptitudes and particular needs of all students, and thereby raise expectations and achievement. They follow a comprehensive review of the curriculum and the timings of the school day. Full advantage is being taken of the greater flexibility now becoming available in the statutory curriculum. Planning has included visits to other schools, consultation with staff and discussions with the Education Action Zone (EAZ), which is helping to fund the

vocational ICT course. European funding is also being sought. All courses will be accredited GCSE or vocational courses.

45. Provision for PSHCE is very good, as it was at the time of the last inspection. The programme is well planned and managed and covers many issues of relevance to the health and well being of young people. It is founded on a conviction that students' personal development plays a significant role in their ability to learn and achieve. It is closely linked to the National Curriculum. In addition to health-related topics such as drug abuse and sex education, there is an emphasis on citizenship, designed to enable young people to understand and participate in the society in which they live. Citizenship will be available as a short GCSE course from September 2002. The PSHCE programme is currently taught by form tutors in weekly lessons throughout the school. It is planned to establish a team of specialist teachers for Years 10 and 11, in order to provide expertise in the more sensitive issues included at that stage. Careers education, an important element of PSHCE, is of very good quality, providing each student with work experience in Year 10 and individual guidance about the options available when they leave school. The programme of PSHCE as a whole benefits from enthusiastic and energetic leadership, the school's success in obtaining funding from a wide range of sources, and from close liaison with parents, specialist agencies and members of the local community.
46. Students' learning is enriched by a good range of clubs and out of lesson activities. There are particular strengths in games, dance and sporting activities, including the 'Panathlon' sports competition, in which the school excels at a national level; and also in the Duke of Edinburgh Award and Junior Sports Leaders' Award. Chess is very popular and students compete against each other and other schools. In addition, there are many subject-based activities, such as after-school lessons leading to GCSE in religious education, classical civilisation, Turkish and orienteering. There are also revision and homework clubs, drop-in sessions to support learning in a range of subjects, and clubs in video production and robotics. There is an annual activities week and many residential visits in this country and abroad, as well as visits to museums, galleries and other sites of academic and cultural interest.
47. The community makes an important contribution to students' learning. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Local businesses support the programme of work experience, and the Hackney Careers Service and the community police contribute to the PSHCE programme. The Stationers' Company has funded an ICT suite. There are close links with the local Anglican Church. Representatives of various community groups address assemblies, and students' personal development is strongly supported by extensive work in support of local charities. The use of the Internet to enable the wider community to contribute to students' learning is at an early stage.
48. Learning in Years 7 to 9 benefits from the school's close links with its partner primary schools. In a project funded by the EAZ, primary and secondary teachers work together to plan parts of the curriculum and observe each other's teaching. Students from the school also support several activities in primary schools. There are productive links with local colleges of further education, which provide support for students and parents in choosing post-16 courses. In addition, close links with Gordonstoun School and with universities, including Cambridge, provide enrichment and inclusion through widening students' perspectives and raising their self-esteem and expectations.
49. Provision for literacy is satisfactory and there are plans to improve this further. The school has recently formulated a policy to promote literacy within all subjects and is planning to appoint a literacy co-ordinator. All staff have been trained in supporting students' literacy skills within their subject. The literacy action plan includes clearly defined objectives and targets, which are to be included in departmental plans and incorporated in lessons.
50. The school is also committed to raising the level of numeracy, but the plans are less advanced than for literacy. An action plan has been written, which includes training teachers, providing resources and writing a numeracy policy. A numeracy co-ordinator is to be appointed. A revised

curriculum with more opportunities to improve numerical skills is under development. However, plans to set students numeracy targets and assess their progress are at a very early stage.

51. The school provides good equality of opportunity. It has an equal opportunities policy, which clearly states the school's belief that all students are of equal value, and its intention that their specific needs should be met, limited only by the resources available. The school is firmly committed to being an inclusive school and providing all students with full access to the curriculum and additional support as necessary.
52. Provision for students with special educational needs is satisfactory overall. The special educational needs policy sets out the school's intention to encourage all students to develop their independence and play a full part in school life. It also includes procedures for training support staff and encouraging good attitudes in all students towards those with special educational needs. The school is successful in achieving these aims. There are, however, areas in need of further development. Some teachers do not have sufficient knowledge of students' individual needs or know best how to meet these needs. In addition, some subjects do not have enough learning resources that are appropriate for students with special educational needs. In the current Year 11, a group of students with special educational needs follow City and Guilds 'entry level' courses in communication and mathematics. The level of these courses is too low and students have made little progress since the start of Year 10. This is, however, the last year the courses will run and the school's review of the curriculum includes plans for more appropriate examination courses.
53. The provision for students with English as an additional language (EAL) is satisfactory, though departmental approaches are too variable. Not all departments give enough guidance to staff. The work that the head of the EAL department is doing in consultation with departments in rotation is an appropriate strategy for improvement.
54. Gifted and talented students are provided with enrichment and extension activities through a new programme that is beginning to add significantly to the school's curriculum. The initiative is well organised and energetically managed by the co-ordinator for gifted and talented students. Students are identified in each year group and each student has an individual action plan to develop their abilities. Students and their parents have been consulted on how they can be helped by the programme. Subjects that have begun to extend their provision include English, French, music and physical education. Regular reports are written to evaluate the provision and there has been a report to the governors.
55. The school is part of the Excellence in Cities programme, which provides funding for gifted and talented students and support for the school's co-ordinator. Lack of funding has limited project initiatives somewhat but there are still many interesting initiatives taking place. Thirty students took part in an Earthquake Challenge, for example, where students were presented with the problem of dropping medical supplies safely into an area devastated by an earthquake. Students tested their ideas by dropping their packages from a height of two metres. The winning team managed to construct packaging, which when dropped, protected a raw egg from breaking! There is an after-school robotics club – a result of a 'Walking with Robots' workshop – and the school is planning to enter a team for the BBC programme 'Techno Games'.
56. The school's commitment to support students' personal, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development is clearly reflected in the school's aims, and especially strongly in the PSHCE programme. This programme contributes well to students' moral and social awareness. Provision is guided by a concern to promote responsibility, respect for others and good relationships. It focuses on the links between actions and their consequences, with an emphasis on the need to make choices, distinguish between right and wrong, and take responsibility for one's own actions in, for example, issues relating to sex, drugs and relationships. These principles are reinforced by the school's behaviour policy and by the system of rewards and sanctions. Their effect is somewhat weakened, however, by the fact that a minority of teachers are inconsistent in implementing the behaviour policy.

57. The support of students' social development is a significant strength. There are extensive opportunities for them to develop confidence and self-esteem through taking responsibility within the school and in the locality. In school, students assume responsibility as receptionists, prefects, school councillors, form captains and as mentors to younger students. Many students take part in a wide range of activities with partner primary schools, for instance, in literacy and dance, and in physical education, where students from primary schools visit the school to be taught by students preparing for the Junior Sports Leaders' Award. Year 10 boys of African and Caribbean heritage are being trained to act as mentors to Year 5 Afro-Caribbean boys in local primary schools whose behaviour is causing concern. Students also take part in local, national and international charity work, including the regular support of a local hospice.
58. There are good opportunities for students to develop their cultural awareness. The varied ethnic and cultural backgrounds of the students are valued and incorporated within the curriculum and daily life of the school. Curricular planning takes account of ethnic traditions, such as the strong oral traditions of the Black African and Black Caribbean students. There is also an awareness of different cultural traditions in the curriculum of many subjects. In music, for example, students listen to music from around the world. History celebrates the achievements of famous black men and art provides opportunities for students to appreciate the work of artists from a range of cultures, including African and Native American. Students' cultural development also benefits from visits that take place in many subjects, and those to theatres, museums and galleries.
59. Support for students' spiritual development is unsatisfactory, as it was at the time of the last inspection. There is, however, a commitment to improving the provision. Spiritual development is supported in religious education, where there is a focus on enabling students to understand the meaning of religion for them personally. It is also promoted in activities such as the annual carol service, where religious education combines with music and art to provide a meaningful act of celebration and worship. There are some other occasions that support spiritual development – in English, for example, when students have the opportunity to reflect on the meaning of literature, and in assemblies, when students engage in prayer. However, such instances are infrequent and opportunities to support spiritual development are missed in many subjects. A recent review of practice has resulted in a policy for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development that seeks to take more consistent advantage of all the opportunities within subjects and in the daily life of the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

60. There are very good procedures to ensure students' safety and welfare, and these have improved since the last inspection. Procedures for risk assessment are rigorous and record keeping is thorough. There are enough staff with first aid training and the medical room is used and supervised appropriately. Child protection procedures are very good. An assistant headteacher is the named responsible person. He has been trained for the role and ensures all staff are given appropriate guidance. The school has a good pastoral system, which is temporarily being co-ordinated by the headteacher. Tutors, heads of year and the headteacher have a good knowledge of students' individual circumstances and the challenges they face that may affect their learning. There are good relationships throughout the school.
61. Many students in all year groups receive individual support from learning mentors. The school has a well co-ordinated team of mentors, who work closely with students who are likely to underachieve and help them to achieve their full potential. Students receive guidance in communication and organisational skills, increasing self-esteem and confidence and developing a greater commitment to their education. A student interviewed during the inspection spoke positively about the help he is receiving in organising and completing his homework and the beneficial impact it is having on his learning.
62. There are satisfactory procedures for monitoring attendance. The school has set challenging targets for improved attendance, and intends to achieve these by rigorous monitoring and by increasing the emphasis on achievement. Heads of year monitor attendance regularly and meet weekly with the education welfare officer to track patterns of absences and discuss strategies to

improve the attendance of individual students. The school-home support worker checks registers and contacts parents of students who are causing concern in Years 7 and 8. Registers are taken at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions and during every lesson. Progress in improving attendance is being hampered by technical problems with a computerised system of recording attendance

63. There are good procedures for promoting positive behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour. A system of rewards and sanctions is in place, and the headteacher has set up a working party to ensure rewards are used consistently and that they are relevant to the ages of the students receiving them. Most teachers manage students well, though there is some inconsistency in the behaviour that they expect of students. This results in students having to adjust to each teacher's expectations and can give rise to some disruptive behaviour. The school is committed to a policy of inclusion and makes every effort to manage students' behavioural difficulties within school before resorting to exclusion. There are plans to set up a learning support unit for students who are temporarily withdrawn from class for behavioural reasons.
64. The procedures for assessing students' attainment and progress are satisfactory. Practice within subjects is guided by a school policy. Teachers regularly assess and record students' attainment in relation to the National Curriculum. In most subjects students know the level at which they are working, and in some subjects, such as English and art, they are given clear guidance on how to improve their work. A common area of development – in science, history, French and music – is the need to use assessment records to set students targets and monitor their progress. Assessment is a strength in English and French, though in French and also in history there is some inconsistency in the use of the National Curriculum levels.
65. There are good procedures at a school level for monitoring and supporting students' academic progress. Good records are kept of students' results in National Curriculum and other tests and, on the basis of these, targets are set in each subject. Twice a year, teachers report on progress and parents are informed of their child's progress in relation to national standards and their own targets. Parents are also invited to two target-setting meetings each year with the tutor and the student to discuss progress and agree targets for improvement. Students prepare for these meetings by doing some self-evaluation and completing a personal action plan. The target-setting meetings are appreciated by parents and students.
66. The headteacher has done a careful analysis of recent examination results, comparing these with national and local figures. This analysis has led to the review of the curriculum in Years 10 and 11 and of the timings of the school day. The intention is to set higher expectations of what students can achieve, raise academic standards and improve attendance and punctuality. The use of assessment to guide planning within subjects is satisfactory, with some good examples. In English and mathematics, for example, students who make particularly good progress are offered the opportunity to take GCSE examinations in Year 10.
67. The arrangements for identifying students with special educational needs follow the procedures recommended in the Code of Practice. Assessment procedures for those students who have a Statement of Special Educational Need meet statutory requirements and the school ensures that provision outlined in the Statement is implemented. The school cares well for students in need of particular attention and works well with outside agencies. Students with special educational needs receive good advice and guidance in relation to their studies and on personal issues.
68. Students with special educational needs have individual education plans and these are made available to teachers in order that they can plan appropriately. However, the plans are not as helpful as they might be, because many of the targets they contain are too general, and are not easily understood by the students themselves, as they are not routinely involved in setting them.

69. Students who speak English as an additional language thrive in the atmosphere of support and welcome that is so crucial for their security and learning.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

70. The school has a satisfactory partnership with parents and the new headteacher is taking steps to improve this further. There was a low response to both the pre-inspection questionnaire and to the parents' meeting. Most parents are broadly satisfied with the school, though a number have some strong concerns. There are no particular differences in the views of the school held by parents from different ethnic backgrounds.
71. Most parents believe that the school expects their children to work hard and that the school is well led and managed. A significant minority, however, do not feel that the school works closely with them and do not feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems. At the parents' meeting many parents expressed confidence that the new headteacher makes them feel welcome and deals seriously with their concerns.
72. A quarter of parents who completed the questionnaire do not feel well informed about how their children are getting on. However, the inspection found that the information provided for parents about the progress their children are making is good overall. Annual reports inform parents as to whether their children are working above, below or in line with national expectations. Reports also include targets for improvement, though these are too often focused on students' attitudes and do not always give parents and students enough information to move forward. There is a parent-teacher consultation meeting each year, as well as the two target-setting meetings. These meetings are generally well attended. The procedures for informing parents of their children's progress have improved since the last inspection.
73. The student diary is not always well used as a means of communication between teachers and parents. Parents are asked to sign them each week and many do, but some diaries were seen during the inspection that were not signed and had little homework entered in them. Some parents are concerned that the amount of homework set is not appropriate and is too variable. The inspection found that homework is in most cases set appropriately. The setting of homework is monitored through the school's management system. Students interviewed said that they get homework regularly and that many students attend the drop-in sessions to complete their homework during lunchtime and after school.
74. Parents are kept informed in several other ways. There is a regular newsletter and the new headteacher has included in this a greater focus on students' achievements. Parents are pleased that they now receive more individual letters informing them of their children's successes. The prospectus covers most of the required information, except for parents' right of withdrawal from religious education. There are useful guides for each year group on what is being studied in each subject. Additional parents' meetings are held on transfer from primary schools, Year 9 National Curriculum tests and higher education. The home-school agreement informs parents of their rights and responsibilities. Parents are invited to church services and awards evenings. The headteacher has started a parents' association to encourage parents to become more involved with the life of the school. Parents have been consulted through a questionnaire about their views of the school and their willingness to become more involved. The school is satisfactorily meeting its aim to promote a supportive partnership with parents.
75. Parents of students with special educational needs are encouraged to support their child's learning. Appropriate information is published in the school prospectus and parents are encouraged to contact staff at parents' evenings. Parents of students with a Statement of Special Educational Need are involved in review meetings and contribute to written annual reviews and transition plans. Parents of students who speak English as an additional language are supported through translated letters and some use of an interpreter for Turkish.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

76. The headteacher has been in post for sixth months. As a result of her appointment the management of the school, and the school itself, are in a period of transition.
77. The leadership of the new headteacher is very good. She has a clear view of how the school needs to develop and has successfully communicated this to staff, governors, students and parents. She has identified very clearly and accurately the priorities for improving the school and has initiated a comprehensive programme that is raising expectations of staff and students, is introducing more opportunities for students to achieve and is improving management. This programme for improvement is already having a noticeable effect.
78. The headteacher maintains a highly visible presence around the school and is readily accessible to staff, students and parents. She is provided with good support by the senior management team, which consists of a deputy headteacher, two assistant headteachers and two acting assistant headteachers. The structure and roles of the senior management team are appropriately under review. Currently, some members of the team have too many responsibilities and some areas are suffering as a result. In addition, the headteacher has correctly had to take a personal lead on some areas of school management that need in due course to be delegated when new structures are in place.
79. The reforms of the headteacher, which are focused on raising expectations and creating a culture of achievement, have the support of the great majority of staff and most parents. There is a very comprehensive school improvement plan containing all the priorities for improvement and clear targets for action. All staff have been consulted during the construction of the plan and it has been approved by the governors. While there are weaknesses in the management of a few areas of the school, most staff are motivated and the capacity for improving the school is good. In the parents' meeting, many parents had seen a recent improvement in the way their concerns have been dealt with and a more positive approach to achievement. Most parents believe the school is well led.
80. The governors are very loyal and supportive to the school. Meetings are well attended and well run. Governors have a real interest in knowing what is going on in the school and in providing staff with moral support in their work. Each department has a link governor, who visits the school to meet staff and report back to the governors. The special educational needs governor maintains particularly good links with the school. Governors are also informed through presentations from heads of department.
81. Through their committee structure, governors oversee many areas of school management. They are involved in recruitment and in the performance management of staff. They monitor improvements to the premises and health and safety issues.
82. In recent months, governors have been encouraged to undertake training to support them in fulfilling their responsibilities. This is needed because governors have not previously played their full role in setting the direction for the school or holding the school to account. During the school year 2000/2001, for example, there was no school improvement plan, and prior to March 2001, the financial reports governors received were not sufficient to alert them to the fact that the budget was slipping into deficit. Since they have become aware of the deficit, governors have not taken strategic steps towards putting the school on a sounder financial footing. There are also issues from the previous inspection on which the governors are unaware of how much progress the school has made.
83. There are weaknesses in the strategic management of school finances that the new headteacher and recently appointed bursar have not yet had a chance to rectify. The bursar has been in post a little over a year and has made significant improvements to financial procedures, records and reporting systems. These are all now good. However, at about the time of the bursar's appointment a budget deficit came to light and the school was unable to create a balanced budget for 2001/2. The shortfall was covered by adding to the school's basic budget a significant proportion of the grants allocated by the government for specific purposes. This was

done openly and in consultation with Hackney Local Education Authority, but resulted in some important areas of curricular development being under-funded.

84. Since the budget deficit has been known, there has not been a detailed analysis of the school's expenditure or steps taken to reduce the deficit. The links between planning and spending are unsatisfactory. As a result, the difficulty in creating a balanced budget has arisen again for 2002/3. The school's expenditure per student is in the highest quartile for London schools. While the school provides a sound education and is improving, it is currently not giving satisfactory value for money.
85. The school makes satisfactory use of new technology in its management – for financial records, timetabling and student records. The effectiveness has recently been improved through networking the school's computers, though as yet students' assessment records are not easily available to all teachers. Senior staff use two-way radio and closed circuit television for communication and security purposes. The school is experimenting with computerised registers as part of its drive to improve attendance and punctuality.
86. Best value principles are implemented to a satisfactory degree through seeking quotes before entering into contracts and making purchases. The bursar also has plans to monitor departmental spending in relation to their intentions. The lack of a full analysis of expenditure, however, means that, particularly in relation to expenditure on staffing, the school has no information on whether it is giving best value.
87. The school benefits from some national initiatives. It is part of Excellence in Cities. This project has provided funding and guidance for supporting gifted and talented students, learning mentors and for a learning support unit. The school is also part of the Hackney Education Action Zone and has used this support to improve its computer facilities, provide additional study support, promote links with primary schools and parents, and support students from ethnic minorities. The school has made good use of this support, but some of the developments have been significantly slowed down because some funding has been used to balance the deficit in the budget. Since her appointment, the headteacher has agreed with the governors that future grants will be used for their intended purpose.
88. The managers of the school are subject to a number of external bureaucratic demands on their time. These include reading a large number of documents published by government departments, the Local Education Authority (LEA) and the Diocese, though the headteacher has since her appointment become more efficient in dealing with this paperwork. Additional calls on management time come from LEA meetings, though these have recently become better organised and the most important management meetings are held at convenient times outside school hours.
89. There are good arrangements for monitoring and developing the quality of teaching. There are clear expectations of when and how heads of department will monitor the work of students and teachers, including the quality of marking and homework. Each head of department is linked to one of the senior management team, and they have regular meetings to check on the work of the department. These processes and their outcomes are recorded and are regularly monitored by the headteacher. This is successful in making clear the expectations of staff at all levels. While lesson observation is expected to be part of the monitoring process, this does not take place in a consistent way. The headteacher also meets each head of department to set targets for the year and has used these meetings to raise expectations.
90. The leadership and management of subjects are good in English, French, design and technology, history, geography, music and physical education. Art is being well managed by a newly qualified teacher during the absence of the head of department. Mathematics is satisfactorily managed, but leadership is unsatisfactory because many issues for development are not being dealt with. Leadership and management of ICT are unsatisfactory because the head of department has too many other duties and has been unable to keep pace with curricular developments. There is currently no permanent head of science, and leadership of science is

weak because there is no vision for development and temporary teachers are not given enough guidance. The headteacher has plans to improve the leadership of science and ICT.

91. The headteacher has since her appointment implemented a policy and procedures for performance management and all teachers have set their own objectives for improving their teaching. In-service training is very well organised. Very good records are kept and all staff, including support staff, are actively encouraged to take part in training. All training has to contribute to the school improvement plan and is evaluated for its impact on raising standards. At present there are only informal links between the monitoring of teaching, performance management and in-service training. There is more potential to ensure that monitoring of teaching leads to the sharing of good practice. The government-funded training programme for teachers in the use of ICT in their teaching has begun but is not yet complete. This is significant since the use of ICT in teaching is a weakness in many subjects.
92. The arrangements for induction of new staff and newly-qualified staff are very good. New staff are well informed of school procedures. Newly-qualified staff are supported by regular timetabled meetings with their head of department and with an assistant headteacher. They are observed teaching and given constructive feedback. They are also given opportunities to observe other teachers in the school and to visit other schools. They have an appropriately reduced teaching timetable. The school is a successful provider of initial teacher training and has trainee teachers each year.
93. There is a satisfactory match between teachers' qualifications and experience and the subjects they teach. Difficulties with recruitment and retention have arisen in many subjects. Standards in science have been particularly affected – the head of department post is a temporary appointment and there are three temporary teachers filling vacancies. There are also temporary teachers in English, French, design and technology, history, art, physical education and special educational needs. In most cases, temporary staff are well supported and standards are being maintained, though this is not the case in science. In English and French, students' current learning is still affected by previous difficulties that are now resolved. Staffing is good in history and geography.
94. The science technicians are knowledgeable and committed and make a good contribution to practical science. Technicians also provide good support in design and technology. There is no technician in ICT and this affects standards because the head of department spends too much time maintaining and extending the equipment. In French, students' oral skills benefit from sessions with the foreign language assistant. The school office is efficiently run by the office staff and bursar. The work of the learning mentors is well co-ordinated.
95. The EAL department is well managed. New staff receive helpful training in providing for students with English as an additional language, and all staff receive records of students' language needs. The EAL support staff are well deployed, so that departments are supported in rotation and students at the earliest stages of learning English are given priority. Not enough attention is given at whole school level, however, to ensure that all subject departments support students with English as an additional language in a consistent manner.
96. The language and learning support department is well managed by the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO). She maintains a clear educational direction and seeks to promote high standards through rigorous monitoring and evaluation. As an assistant headteacher, however, the breadth of her senior responsibilities places an unreasonable burden upon her time. This is especially so because of the very high number of students who have special educational needs. The headteacher is appropriately reviewing the roles and responsibilities of the senior management team. This school is on target to meet the requirements of the revised special educational needs Code of Practice by September 2002.
97. The school's accommodation is good and, internally, provides a bright, cheerful and stimulating environment for learning in almost all areas of the school. Work is very effectively presented in high quality displays around most of the school and the condition of the school is clean, safe,

and very well maintained. Almost all departments have rooms that are situated conveniently close to each other and have appropriate office and storage areas. Exceptions are ICT, where the space provided is inadequate, and physical education, where outdoor facilities are very limited and the gymnasium is used extensively during examination periods. This seriously limits space available for physical education. Drama has been recently introduced into the curriculum and, as yet, there is no appropriate, dedicated space.

98. There is a satisfactory quantity and range of learning resources to support the curriculum. The library is a good size and is well managed. It offers a good range of services for students and is well used. The ratio of library books to students is broadly in line with the national average. The number of computers is well below that expected nationally and most subject areas have insufficient access to computers. This is a significant factor in the failure in most subjects to use ICT to support teaching and learning.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

99. The headteacher has already identified many of the most important priorities for improvement and the school is showing clear signs of improvement. In order to raise standards further the governors and senior management should:

- (1) Increase the proportion of students who gain GCSE and other qualifications, by:
 - raising expectations of what students can achieve;*
 - reviewing the practice of withdrawing students from GCSE if their work or attendance is poor;*
 - ensuring students are entered for appropriate qualifications in subjects wherever possible.*

(Paragraphs 4, 7, 43, 44)
- (2) Improve attendance and punctuality in Years 10 and 11, by:
 - continuing to make the procedures for monitoring attendance more rigorous;*
 - introducing courses that are more relevant to students' aspirations;*
 - taking steps to increase students' sense of achievement.*

(Paragraphs 4, 14, 21, 42, 62)
- (3) Increase the level of consistency in the expectations teachers have of students' work and behaviour, by:
 - making explicit what is expected of students and teachers;
 - implementing consistent procedures for managing behaviour;
 - sharing the good practice in teaching that exists in the school.

(Paragraphs 16, 27, 28, 29, 63)
- (4) Make full use of ICT to support teaching and learning of other subjects, by:
 - improving the access that teachers have to computers for their teaching;
 - providing all teachers with appropriate in-service training;
 - including opportunities for ICT in departmental planning.

(Paragraphs 32, 41, 91, 98, 180)
- (5) Improve the strategic management of school finances, by:
 - examining current expenditure, particularly on staffing, for best value;
 - strengthening the links between planning and spending;
 - creating a firm plan for balancing the budget.*

(Paragraphs 82, 83, 84, 86)

In addition to the above issues for action, the school should give consideration to:

- raising standards in science through improved management of the department;*
- (Paragraphs 6, 143)*
- increasing the level of individual support in lessons for students with special educational needs;
- (Paragraph 37)*
- improving the arrangements for spiritual development.*
- (Paragraph 59)*

**These issues are already included in the school's planning*

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

The provision for and standards reached by students with English as an additional language.

Overall, the quality of provision in English as an additional language (EAL) is **satisfactory**.

100. The students who speak English as an additional language come from a wide range of ethnic groups. The most widely spoken community languages are Yoruba, Turkish, Patois and Vietnamese. The large majority of these students are fluent in most aspects of the use of English, though they still need support in the use and understanding of very formal writing or complex words. A very small number are comparatively new to English or becoming familiar with it, and some, whilst more confident, are not yet fluent.
101. Overall, the standards reached by students who speak English as an additional language are not significantly different from the standards of students in the school as a whole. Both those at the early stages and those who are more fluent make satisfactory progress, though standards are well below average at the end of Years 9 and 11. There is no difference between the progress made by students of different language backgrounds.
102. Students' achievement is satisfactory overall, and there are areas of strength. Students achieve well in GCSE English. In 2001, 47 per cent gained English language GCSE grades A* to C. Their learning is good in English because the English teachers are very aware of the particular needs of these students and work closely with the EAL department to meet those needs. In a very good Year 7 English lesson on story telling, for example, the provision of a variety of tasks for groups developed speaking and listening skills well, and more formal writing was supported where needed with 'writing frames' to help students organise their ideas. Good work is also being done in the geography department, again with close liaison with the EAL department, and in art, music and modern foreign languages.
103. The teaching of students with English as an additional language is satisfactory. There is, however, a wide variation across the different subjects. Where students are supported by specialist teachers or instructors, the teaching is satisfactory or better. Where there is no support there is some unsatisfactory teaching, but also some good work where the department or individual teachers make provision. The specialist instructor makes a very significant difference for the students who are at early stages of acquisition of English. All of these have Turkish as their first language, and the instructor is able to translate as well as simplify the English. In a very good Year 9 history lesson on the holocaust, students were particularly well supported by clear instructions and tasks that were well matched to the stage they were at. A student who was less familiar with English was enabled to gain in historical knowledge and understanding because of the work of the instructor.
104. When two teachers are present, the teaching is better when the EAL support teacher is involved in the lesson – planning with subject teachers or teaching part of the lesson to the whole class. Where the support teacher merely reacts to difficulties and questions from students, some expertise is wasted and the pace is slower. The support is then more effective in giving the student access to the subject being studied than in extending the English. At the moment the teacher keeps general records of what she has done in this more reactive support role but notes of what students can do lack enough detail. For example, 'increasing confidence in speech', as opposed to brief details of context, sentence length, vocabulary or awareness of listeners' needs. Without good records it is hard to set detailed targets and without detailed short or medium term targets to keep closely in mind in support, there is a danger that time can be wasted.
105. Provision is satisfactory overall. At the time of the last inspection provision was good, but the EAL department receives very much less external funding than five years ago. Given the reduced resources, the department is well managed. The staff are well deployed, with a dual focus – to support those students at the earliest stages of learning English individually, through withdrawal where needed, and to work with departments in rotation. The intention is right – to

raise subject teachers' awareness of what they can do to improve their teaching of students with English as an additional language and to improve departmental resources and planning documents. However, at the moment there is not enough attention given at whole school level to ensuring that work done is taken on by the whole department once the focus from EAL staff has moved on. The effect is not being monitored and evaluated. In science, for example, despite a heavy input last term, staffing changes mean that the impact has been lost and the students with English as an additional language are not currently making enough progress.

106. The head of the EAL department has achieved much, and is aware of what needs to be done. Detailed records of levels reached in tests and examinations by students with English as an additional language are given to all subject teachers, together with a clear picture of what stage of English acquisition they are at. New staff receive good quality training in providing for students with English as an additional language. The head of department is able to advise on the class that students with English as an additional language are best placed in. Since the arrival of the bilingual support instructor, the department is also able to assess progress in subjects using Turkish and thus ensure that a student with little English can be placed in a class that is intellectually challenging enough. The school as a whole has achieved an atmosphere of support and welcome for students who speak different languages, without which their settling and learning would be very much harder. They are given the confidence to ask for help and they feel they are among friends. As a result they have good attitudes and work hard. Parents, too, are supported through translated letters and an interpreter for Turkish is available if needed.

Special educational needs assessment

Overall, the assessment of the academic performance of students' special educational needs is **good** and their welfare is well monitored and supported.

107. The progress of students with special educational needs is closely assessed and monitored. Assessment procedures in the language and learning support department are linked to those of the whole school. There is good liaison with partner primary schools and students' learning needs are known well on entry to the school. Their progress is monitored in relation to their National Curriculum assessments, cognitive ability test scores, reading and spelling ages. Diagnostic tests are used to gain a fuller understanding of learning difficulties, and to identify those who require additional assistance. There is on-going liaison with subject departments to check students' progress in each subject and to help teachers in assessing students' day-to-day progress. Students are assessed by each teacher in relation to the National Curriculum. Subject staff are encouraged to discuss individual students' progress within their departments and refer to the SENCO students who are experiencing particular difficulty in their subject. All teachers are given special monitoring forms to record relevant aspects of the students' work in lessons. This system is thorough and aims to make the most appropriate provision to meet the needs of each individual student.
108. At the end of each term the staff who have supported each student with special educational needs jointly compile a short report. This is submitted to the SENCO and the relevant head of department. It includes an outline of work undertaken, an assessment of the effectiveness of any adjustments to the curriculum and suggestions for future work. Immediate problems are discussed with the appropriate head of department, who liaises regularly with the SENCO. When her other commitments allow, the SENCO undertakes classroom observations in order to assess the effectiveness of the action that has been taken.
109. The special educational needs department keeps detailed records. Each student has a file that contains information from the primary school, results of diagnostic assessment, records of withdrawal provision, comments from subject staff, notes of outside referrals, reports and profiling forms. All special educational needs files are used in conjunction with the main school files. Students who attend withdrawal group sessions have detailed diagnostic assessments, individual work programmes and weekly records completed by the teacher in their withdrawal lessons.

110. On joining the withdrawal programme, students use a self-assessment rating scale to identify areas of strength and weakness. The assessment is used again at the end of the programme to measure progress in listening skills, anger management and deeper understanding of feelings and attitudes. When students are re-integrated into their full timetable their progress continues to be monitored by the class teacher.
111. The progress of students with Statements of Special Educational Need is assessed and quantified in detail. The objectives that are outlined in statements are well supported by provision made by the school and contributions from external agencies. Until September 2001, however, students with Statements that outlined speech and language needs did not receive the support they needed from Hackney's Speech and Language Therapy Service. The school has made every effort to rectify this. Similar problems occurred with Hackney's Educational Psychology Service. The school's educational psychologist left the borough at the end of 2000 and was not replaced. Since then the school has received some input from the Educational Psychology Service on an ad hoc basis, but some students with special educational needs could not be properly assessed and moved through the stages of the special educational needs register.
112. Objectives in Statements are systematically transferred to the targets within individual education plans. Individual education plans are in place for all students identified at Stages 2 to 5 of the register. When individual education plans are being effectively used it is because they have an appropriate and manageable number of targets and the teachers are making good use of the targets when they are planning and teaching their lessons. However, many individual education plans are not as effective as they might be. This is because some students are not involved in setting their own targets and some parents are not aware of the targets that their child is working towards. Many targets are not short-term, achievable and measurable, and therefore students do not know the target they are working towards and cannot tell when they have succeeded. Some individual education plans do not include enough strategies that show students what they can do in order to achieve their targets.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	154
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	57

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	13	59	60	15	4	0
Percentage	2	11	38	43	4	2	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	746
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	351

Special educational needs

	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	43
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	331

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	267

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	35
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	39

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	9.4
National comparative data	8.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	2.9
National comparative data	1.1

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage (Year 9)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	81	68	149

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	27	32	26
	Girls	29	30	27
	Total	56	62	53
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	38 (54)	42 (36)	36 (23)
	National	64 (63)	66 (65)	66 (59)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	11 (18)	16 (16)	6 (2)
	National	31 (28)	43 (42)	34 (30)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	20	21	12
	Girls	23	16	13
	Total	43	37	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	29 (31)	25 (32)	17 (19)
	National	65 (64)	68 (66)	64 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	6 (7)	4 (11)	7 (4)
	National	31 (31)	42 (39)	33 (29)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 (Year 11)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	86	64	150

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	15	60	77
	Girls	17	49	58
	Total	32	109	135
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	21 (18)	73 (73)	90 (89)
	National	48 (47)	91 (91)	96 (96)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score	School	27.3 (24.6)

Per pupil	National	39.0 (38.4)
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Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	198
Black – African heritage	198
Black – other	0
Indian	11
Pakistani	3
Bangladeshi	8
Chinese	20
White	161
Any other minority ethnic group	147

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	42	1
Black – African heritage	30	2
Black – other	6	
Indian	1	
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	31	1
Other minority ethnic groups	8	

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

Teachers and classes**Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	49.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	14.9

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	197

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	75.5
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	22
Key Stage 4	18

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
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	£
Total income	2,652,987
Total expenditure	2,776,397
Expenditure per pupil	3,717
Balance brought forward from previous year	63,358
Balance carried forward to next year	-60,052

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	18
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	11
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	6
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	746
Number of questionnaires returned	52

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	58	31	4	8	0
My child is making good progress in school.	39	37	14	8	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	35	31	20	8	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	40	40	6	12	2
The teaching is good.	33	41	10	4	12
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	29	8	15	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	49	24	24	2	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	54	30	8	2	6
The school works closely with parents.	39	33	18	4	6
The school is well led and managed.	50	24	8	4	14
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	48	35	2	8	8
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	43	39	12	0	6

Other issues raised by parents

Some parents were concerned that expectations of behaviour were not consistent and that some teachers used inappropriate language and humiliating tactics when disciplining students.

Some parents felt that they had an inadequate response when raising concerns with the school, though they were happy with the response of the new headteacher.

Some parents felt that not enough was expected of students, that not enough homework was set after Year 7 and that students did not bring home finished or marked work.

Parents reported that occasionally students were sent home without parents being informed.

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

ENGLISH

Overall, the quality of provision in English is **good**.

Strengths

- Teaching is good.
- Students make good progress.
- Students have a positive attitude to the subject.
- Assessment is good.
- The department is well led and managed.

Areas for improvement

- Standards and results are below the national average.
- Too few students have the opportunity to take GCSE examinations.
- Staffing has been less than adequate.

113. Standards in Year 9 National Curriculum tests in 2001 were well below average. They were lower than in 2000 though there has been an upwards trend in recent years. There was no significant difference between the performance of girls and boys. Students' achievements in relation their prior attainment on joining the school were good.
114. GCSE examination results in English in 2001 were below average. Results in English literature were slightly above average and boys in particular did well compared with boys nationally. However, only about three-quarters of the students were entered for GCSE in English and in English literature. There has been a significant improvement in GCSE results over the last four years. Students' achievements in relation to their prior attainment at the end of Year 9 were good overall, though the relatively large number of students who were not entered for GCSE English is a cause for concern.
115. The standards of work seen are in line with the test and examination results. Standards overall are well below average in Year 9 and below average in Year 11, though a minority of students are in line with or above national averages. Students have a sound knowledge of the texts they study and discuss these well in most lessons. A good example of this was in a Year 9 lesson on *Twelfth Night*, where the students' good understanding of the text enabled worthwhile discussions to take place in groups. Students read aloud with some confidence, albeit stumbling over some relatively common words. Writing skills are generally not as well developed as speaking and listening skills. Students often write too briefly. The quality of their presentation is variable.
116. Many students have low literacy levels; their reading ages are low when they come to the school, and what they achieve each year represents good progress. Difficulties with literacy affect the standards they reach in some other subjects, such as French and geography, but the skills gained in English support their learning of these subjects. There is no significant difference in the progress made by students from different ethnic backgrounds. Students with English as an additional language make good progress. Apart from two 'fast-track' sets in each year group, students are taught in mixed ability classes. Within the mixed ability classes, students with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Teachers plan appropriately to meet their needs, but their learning is also dependent on the quality of support they receive individually. Support teachers are used in some lessons but this support is thinly spread considering the range of needs in most classes. This is one reason that a relatively large number of students are not ready to take GCSE examinations in Year 11. On the other hand, higher-attaining students are able to sit the examinations a year early.

117. Teaching is good. Students learn well in most of their lessons and as a result most make good progress. There have been considerable staffing difficulties over the past two years and many classes have been taught by inexperienced or temporary teachers. The teaching of the present staff is at least satisfactory and in most cases good. It is characterised by good subject knowledge and well-planned lessons, although there are instances of teachers being unfamiliar with aspects of the subject – including rules of grammar – or with cultural sensitivities of the students. Sometimes teachers have unrealistic expectations or set tasks that are too demanding for their students, but most lessons are challenging and well paced. Group work is used to good effect, using some creative resources. A class of lower-attaining Year 7 students, for example, assembled faces from cut up pictures before discussing the characters in groups and entering their findings on a chart. The task helped them to structure their ideas and to make good progress. Occasionally, not all students are kept on task, but in general teachers manage their classes satisfactorily; they know their students and are anxious to support their learning. Homework is regularly set, work is marked thoroughly and students are left in no doubt about what level they have reached in their learning. Assessment is a strength of the department.
118. Students show a positive response to the subject. They are keen to answer questions and respect their teachers. They usually listen well, although occasionally a small minority, usually boys, is somewhat unsettled. Students work well in groups in most lessons, and are eager to learn. There is occasionally some unsatisfactory behaviour and instances where students do not co-operate, but teachers handle this well. The norm is a quiet working atmosphere, with students quickly on task and working productively together.
119. The quality and range of learning opportunities in English are satisfactory, taking into account the number unable to take GCSE examinations. Some take instead a certificate of achievement, which gives them a sound foundation for further studies. From Year 7, there is a strong emphasis on literature; the laudable aim is to make reading fun. The relatively strong performance in GCSE English literature is due in part to the good foundations laid in the first few years. There are many opportunities for students to write creatively, and they are given good help with this. The National Literacy Strategy is well embedded and many lessons use the teaching methods that are proving to be effective nationally, although the length of lessons – particularly single periods of 45 minutes or less – does not allow the range of activities needed in any one lesson to be covered adequately. Teachers are aware that many students need extra help, and give up their lunch times on most days to provide ‘drop-in’ sessions where students can receive extra support. Funding for ‘booster classes’ has become available, and these will be in place soon. ICT is used for word processing and to gather information from the Internet. Parents are supportive of their children’s learning, and many are keen to purchase the revision books for the National Curriculum tests.
120. The department is well led and managed by a very experienced teacher, who models good practice for her colleagues. Teachers are given the opportunity to watch each other’s lessons, which helps to raise standards, and teaching is also monitored more formally. Monitoring has been particularly important with so many staff changes in recent years. Lack of continuity has been a problem, and there is still a vacant post, currently filled by an unqualified teacher from overseas. Inexperienced and temporary teachers are, however, given good support, as are the trainee teachers that the department welcomes regularly. There is good accommodation for English, with a department office and a suite of rooms around a wide corridor area, and there are good displays both inside and outside the classrooms. There is a small computer room for English, although the computers need updating. Other resources are just about adequate, although staff feel they do not have enough resources and supplement them at their own expense. This illustrates their commitment to the subject.
121. Improvement since the last inspection has been good, in spite of setbacks caused by irregular staffing. The teaching is now satisfactory or better in all lessons and standards have risen over the past five years. There is good capacity for further improvement.

Drama

122. Drama has only recently been introduced as a separate subject, and is taught to students in Years 7 and 8 and to students in Year 10 who have opted for the GCSE course. The plan is to expand the provision, although the success of the subject will depend on suitable accommodation becoming available and the appointment of additional qualified teaching staff. The subject is well led within the performing arts department; a music teacher with good theatrical experience is in charge, assisted by an unqualified teacher from overseas.
123. Three lessons were seen during the inspection. Teaching and standards of work are satisfactory overall, and students are enthusiastic about the subject.

MATHEMATICS

Overall, the quality of provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Teaching is satisfactory overall.
- Teachers have a satisfactory knowledge of the subject.
- Procedures for assessing students' attainment and progress are good.

Areas for improvement

- Teaching methods do not develop students' thinking skills sufficiently.
- More opportunities are needed for teachers to share good teaching practice.
- There are too few opportunities for students to talk and write about mathematics.
- Boys achieve less well than girls at the age of 16.

124. Results in Year 9 National Curriculum tests in 2001 were well below average. They were similar to English and better than in science. Students' achievements in relation to their attainment on entry to the school were satisfactory. Girls' results were slightly better than those of boys. Teachers' assessments in 2001 under-estimated students' results in the tests. GCSE results in 2001 were well below average but in line with those of similar schools. Girls performed significantly better than boys. Results were lower than in English but better than in science. Students' achievements in relation to their prior attainment at the end of Year 9 were satisfactory.
125. The standard of work seen in Year 9 is similar to the test results. It is well below average overall, though the highest-attaining students reach above average standards. High-attaining students have satisfactory numerical skills and in Year 8, for example, are able to convert large numbers into standard index form. Lower-attaining students rely heavily on the use of the calculator and do not know their tables. Students in Year 9 develop a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of shape, space and measurement and progress well in handling data and probability. The standard of written work by higher-attaining students is good, with clear examples and a concern for accuracy. Lower-attaining students' written work is brief, often with only answers recorded and few clear examples to guide their thinking. Some other subjects, such as science, geography and design and technology, make a useful contribution to students' numeracy skills, though the school is at a very early stage of developing a policy for this and opportunities to use number in other subjects are often overlooked.
126. The standard of work seen in Years 10 and 11 is also well below average. The highest-attaining students reach above average standards and some take GCSE mathematics at the end of Year 10. Higher-attaining Year 10 students can apply the rules of algebra to trigonometry and Pythagoras' Theorem, but they do not use estimation to check their answers. Their analytical and estimating skills are not strongly reinforced. Their written work is generally neat and accurate. Work by average and lower-attaining students is below average, with some poor work going unchallenged. Work is legible and of a higher standard than work completed in Years 7 to 9, although students remain heavily reliant on the calculator for many basic calculations. Students make very limited use of computers. Achievement in mathematics is satisfactory for

all students, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language.

127. Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers create a sense of shared purpose in most lessons by explaining at the start of the lesson what is to be learned. Many lessons include the use of a commercially published scheme, where students work individually on modules of work. Students cope well with the organisation of the scheme. However, they have little opportunity to share and demonstrate their knowledge outside the planned scheme and lack both confidence and analytical skills. In the better teaching, teachers use challenging questions to promote intellectual effort and deepen understanding. Too often, however, opportunities for students to confirm their understanding and explain their thinking are overlooked. Teaching methods generally do not provide sufficient opportunities for discussion, thinking and use of ICT.
128. Teachers' planning ranges from thorough to cursory. In a well-planned Year 7 lesson for lower-attaining students on statistics, there was a variety of short activities that helped the students to sustain concentration and enjoy the work. Where lessons are just satisfactory, progress is slower because there is an over reliance on the textbook and published worksheets and not enough focus on the concepts that are being learned. Teachers' expectations are high for the highest-attaining students but not high enough for average and lower-attaining students. Much primary school work is repeated in Years 7 to 9 and the focus of many lessons is on mathematical process rather than conceptual development.
129. Lesson plans often do not take enough account of the wide range of ability of students in the class. Teachers make too many assumptions about students' basic skills, such as the use of the protractor when students embark on an angle measuring exercise. Unsatisfactory use is made of special educational needs support teachers, who fulfil an administrative role in lessons rather than addressing the specific needs of individual students. Homework of an appropriate standard is issued regularly but there is not enough extension work for the higher attainers. There are good procedures for assessing students' attainment on the individualised scheme. However, other marking is inconsistent and lacks written guidance to students on how to improve their work. Students are generally aware of their level of attainment but not what to do to improve. Students in Years 10 and 11 are aware of their GCSE targets and teachers' marking gives them feedback on these.
130. Learning is affected by large classes being taught in relatively small rooms. There are few displays of students' work in classrooms and adjacent corridors to celebrate success and raise self-esteem.
131. There is not enough emphasis on students' use of their language skills in learning mathematics. The essential mathematical words are referred to at the start of lessons but are not displayed in all classrooms. Students respond well when answering teachers' questions, but very few students ask questions themselves. There are few writing opportunities in lessons beyond the completion of exercises, and students do little extended writing. It is also uncommon for students to investigate topics in groups and develop their thinking through discussion. This takes place more in Years 7 to 9 than in Years 10 and 11. Few opportunities are provided for students to demonstrate their understanding to the rest of the class.
132. Leadership of the subject is less than satisfactory because many issues for development are not being addressed vigorously enough. These issues include the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy and planning for literacy and ICT. There are also areas where standards are not as good as they should be. The high-attaining students who take GCSE in Year 10 get few A and A* grades. Boys underachieve in relation to girls. There are too many lower-attaining students who are not entered for GCSE in mathematics. The department has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection, although issues surrounding teaching and learning and students' personal development have not been addressed. Departmental policies are not up-to-date and their implementation needs to be monitored regularly. Day-to-day management of the department is satisfactory and procedures for the collection and analysis of assessment data are good. Teachers have a clear commitment to raising standards although

the sharing of good practice as part of their professional development needs co-ordinating more closely.

SCIENCE

Overall, the quality of provision in science is **unsatisfactory**.

Strengths

- Most students achieve sound standards in chemistry and biology topics and in their practical work because teachers have a good knowledge of these elements of science.
- Students are keen to learn and enjoy doing experiments. They work safely and productively in groups.
- Teachers manage students well, relationships are good and, in the better lessons, teachers use questioning effectively. As a result students behave well and contribute their ideas when asked.

Areas for improvement

- Some lower-attaining students underachieve because curricular plans are not sufficiently matched to their needs or support teachers used effectively in lessons.
- Some higher-attaining students underachieve where they are not challenged sufficiently.
- Arrangements for monitoring students' progress towards their targets are not effective.
- ICT is rarely used to research, gather, process or interpret information from experiments and this adversely affects students' standards.

133. Standards in the Year 9 national tests in 2001 were well below average. In relation to students' prior attainment, their achievements were satisfactory, although the proportion achieving higher levels in these tests was low and also lower than in English or mathematics. Results improved in 2001 and reversed a declining trend in previous years. At GCSE, all students enter for double award science. In 2001 the results were well below average. Standards were also below those of schools with students of similar prior attainment and in similar social contexts. Very few students achieved grades above C and a quarter of students did not achieve a grade, mainly because they did not complete their coursework. There was some underachievement amongst higher-attaining students. The results are an improvement over the previous year but are below the standards achieved in other subjects. There were no significant differences in the standards of boys and girls at the end of Year 9 or at GCSE.

134. Standards seen during the inspection are well below average in both Year 9 and Year 11. Most students achieve satisfactory standards taking account of their prior attainments, especially in biology and chemistry topics and in their practical skills. However, achievement is unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11 overall, because there is too much underachievement within particular groups, specifically the higher-attaining and the lower-attaining students. Students also underachieve in some aspects of physics such as quantitative work, partly because there is less expertise in physics in the department. Many students' skills in planning investigations and in evaluating them are underdeveloped because insufficient lesson time is provided in Years 10 and 11 and they do not practise these skills sufficiently. There are no significant differences in the achievements of students from different ethnic backgrounds.

135. By Year 9, most students can describe differences between solids, liquids and gases, but few students use particle theory confidently to explain them. Many can assemble electrical circuits from diagrams and higher-attaining students can describe how altering the circuit affects devices such as bulbs in terms of current flow. By Year 11, most students describe chemical changes and how the rate of a chemical reaction can be altered, although few can use collision theory to explain the causes. A few higher-attaining students can calculate the formula of a simple compound. Most students describe some features of blood circulation such as the difference between arteries, veins and capillaries and functions of the heart.

136. Students work safely in experiments, they use measuring equipment with care and record results clearly. Students throughout the school enjoy practical work. They co-operate well in

group tasks and are keen to learn more, especially when they are engaged in stimulating activities. By Year 9, most students are able to plan and carry out a fair test in simple contexts and draw conclusions from evidence, although about a third need their teachers' help when making key decisions. By Year 11, students carry out more complex investigations, but some students' graphical and evaluation skills are underdeveloped. For example, students in a Year 11 upper ability class, investigating the effect of changing the concentration of acid in chemical reactions, used equipment safely and accurately to measure and record results and made fair comparisons. However, many were unsure about evaluating the reliability of their measures or suggesting improvements and some represented their results using bar graphs while others used more appropriate lines of best fit.

137. There is some underachievement amongst particular groups. Higher-attaining students underachieve in all years where they are insufficiently challenged by their teachers to apply their knowledge of science to predict, speculate or explain their reasoning. For example, students in Year 9, learning about how current changes in different types of electrical circuits, did not use their knowledge to discuss and predict what may happen before they carried out their experiments, and consequently the task was less demanding. Students are capable of these skills if they are challenged. Some lower-attaining students, particularly in Years 10 and 11, also tend to underachieve. There are several reasons for this: curricular plans have not been adapted sufficiently to match these students' abilities; some teachers give insufficient attention to planning the effective use of support teachers in lessons; and temporary and supply staff tend to be deployed disproportionately to lower ability groups. A Year 10 lesson about genetics illustrates these points well. Lower-attaining students were given quite advanced text and diagrams showing the molecular structure of DNA. The demand of the lesson was pitched well beyond their abilities because insufficient guidance is provided in the guidance given to teachers. The teacher's exposition to the whole class about the features of DNA went on for too long, so that support teachers were unable to work effectively with groups of students. As a result, students were not sufficiently involved in this lesson and little learning took place.
138. Students have good literacy skills and present their written work with care. Teachers introduce new science vocabulary well, and students often write their own short answers to questions from texts. However, class or group discussions that enable students to share their views, formulate an argument or present their findings to the class are rare.
139. Teaching and learning are mainly satisfactory. There is some good teaching but also some that is unsatisfactory, especially in Years 10 and 11. In most lessons, objectives are clear and shared with students, and questions are used to recall recent learning at the start. New ideas are usually explained well because teachers have good subject knowledge, especially of chemistry and biology. Students are generally managed well and their behaviour and attitudes in lessons are good. In the better lessons, teachers challenge students to think and use appropriate vocabulary. For example, students in Year 9 observed a range of chemical changes while their teacher discussed them and asked students questions to develop their understanding as they worked. In the weaker and unsatisfactory lessons, teachers' expectations are too low, resulting in students not being challenged to apply science concepts and theories to predict or explain what may be happening. Teaching methods are sometimes inappropriate. For example, demonstrations and activities that would focus students' interest and promote their understanding are sometimes either missed out or the resources for them are not available, as when teaching Year 10 students about radioactivity without demonstrating it.
140. In Years 7, 8 and 9 in particular, there is too much reliance placed on the use of textbooks in lessons at the expense of group discussion or practical work. There is no use of ICT in the subject, for example to collect data from sensors and display it graphically, or to simulate and model scientific ideas. This is because ICT resources in science are poor and there is insufficient training or understanding about their potential for raising standards. Weaknesses in the use of ICT in science were identified in the last inspection report. Homework is appropriate and effectively extends learning in lessons. Teachers' marking varies in quality. The best provides valuable correction and comments on how to improve but some is irregular and lacks depth.

141. Students are assessed through the use of standard tests in every year group. The results are retained on a central database but they are not yet used systematically to monitor students' progress towards the targets that have been set for them. The potential value of these targets in setting high expectations, or identifying students who may underachieve so that remedial action can be taken, has not been fully explored. One reason for this is that most classes have more than one teacher for their science. While students gain from their teachers' specialist expertise, no teacher is taking overall responsibility for a particular class, monitoring each student's academic and personal development and reporting their progress to parents.
142. The department has had difficulties recruiting sufficient suitable teachers and team leaders. Temporary and supply staff have been deployed for some time, putting extra pressure on the permanent staff and undermining the school's efforts to bring about improvements. The posts of head of science and the second in charge are currently temporary appointments. The school is doing its best to address staff recruitment problems and hopes to make permanent appointments in the coming year. Teachers are well qualified to teach most elements of the curriculum, but there is currently no specialist physics teacher. These recruitment difficulties are adversely affecting students' standards.
143. Management of the subject is unsatisfactory and leadership weak. Insufficient structure and guidance, for example about the curriculum and students' assessments, are provided to enable teachers to work effectively. The department monitors samples of students' work and teachers' marking and homework, guided by senior managers. However, the outcomes are not used to focus the department's work and resources on clear priorities for improvement. There is currently no clear vision for developments within the department. However, examination courses that will be more appropriate for some students and reduce disaffection are being planned as a result of the school's recent review of the curriculum. Overall there has been insufficient improvement since the last inspection.
144. The accommodation is good. Laboratories are modern and welcoming, although some are a little small. Equipment resources are mainly adequate, except for ICT where resources are poor and severely restrict developments in the curriculum. Technicians are very experienced and knowledgeable. They are very committed to the school and make a very good contribution to practical science.

ART AND DESIGN

Overall, the quality of provision in art and design is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Students' achievements are good throughout the school.
- The enthusiasm, commitment and knowledge of the teachers are helping to raise standards.
- The department is well supported by the senior managers and continues to reflect the aims and values of the school very well.

Areas for improvement

- Assessment is not used to help improve the curriculum.
- ICT is not used sufficiently to enhance teaching and learning.
- Students are not making good use of sketchbooks.

145. Standards in GCSE examinations in 2001 were below average. The trend over the last three years shows a steady improvement. Students do better in art than they do in their other subjects, and they achieve well. Teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2001 show that the percentage of students reaching the expected levels of knowledge and skill was well below average.

146. Students in the present Year 11 are working at standards that are just below the national average. Higher-attaining students develop their ideas well using research, drawing and knowledge of the work of other artists. They develop imaginative paintings and three-dimensional pieces. These are based on natural or man-made forms and their drawings from life are thoughtful. The majority of students have not yet developed the habit of collecting ideas, sketches, experiments and notes into a sketchbook to form a handy source of reference for further work. This is likely to limit their success in the coming examination. Students in Year 10 are learning new skills and gaining the confidence to reflect critically on their work.
147. By Year 9, attainment is below average. This represents good achievement, since the students come into the school with well below average knowledge and skills. All students are developing a critical vocabulary and the ability to assess and improve their work as it progresses. Students are able to carry through a design process, such as when exploring the patterns in African art and using these to decorate a coil pot. They use their mathematical skills satisfactorily when they measure and scale their designs, checking to see that they maintain the shape. Sketchbooks in Years 7 to 9 are rudimentary and do not form a sufficient part of the design process.
148. Teaching is good overall. The majority of the teaching seen was good or very good. Teachers plan and prepare their lessons carefully and make sure that the students know exactly what is expected of them. They set high standards for work and behaviour and students respond with interest and enthusiasm. Teachers are also developing the students' self-confidence and discipline by giving them a clear lesson structure and setting targets. This is important because, until quite recently, students in art and design have had to cope with changes in teachers and the timetable due to staffing difficulties. In a good Year 9 lesson, for example, students were told how they should enter and move around the room and were praised when they did this well. They enjoyed the teacher's demonstration of drawing a self-portrait and were inspired to try out different expressions and proportions themselves. At the end, all students felt that they had improved on their previous work. The pacing and timing of lessons is less secure. The teachers' relative inexperience sometimes causes lessons to run on too long before drawing the students together to review progress, praise good work or issue a new challenge. The low-attaining students, in particular, would benefit from more use of reviews, as they tend to become restless and fidgety as their attention wanders. However, teachers give good support to individual students. Those with special educational needs are given extra time, which enables them to learn as well as the rest of the class. When lessons are supported by an additional teacher, such as the teacher who supports students from ethnic minorities, all students benefit. This develops and complements the work of the art teacher. In all the classes there is a broad mix of students from a wide range of different cultural backgrounds and they are equally well looked after. There is no significant difference in achievement between the different groups.
149. The curriculum in art and design is sound. The strengths are in the cultural diversity of the topics studied, the emphasis on drawing skills, and the creative use of simple materials. Areas that need developing include the use of sketchbooks, three-dimensional work and the use of ICT. Neither computers nor videos were used during the inspection. There was no evidence of digital image processing. The department has a sound range of resources including two computers, printing and pottery facilities.
150. During the head of art's extended absence on sick leave, the department is in the highly capable hands of a newly qualified teacher. She is well supported by the school's senior management team. Along with a recently appointed temporary teacher she is continuing the process of building the high standards that were reported in the last inspection. Both teachers are knowledgeable, hardworking and highly committed. The department is dynamic and forward looking with the emphasis on raising students' attainment. Teachers assess students' work effectively, so that students know how well they are doing and how to improve their work. The department is not yet using assessment records to develop the curriculum and teaching. Since the last inspection, standards and the popularity of the subject appear to have fallen. This may be explained by a long period of transition since the retirement of the previous head of art. Providing that the staffing situation remains stabilised and the support given to the department

continues, the school has a good potential to bring art and design back to its previous high standing.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in design and technology is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Teaching is good and there is some excellent teaching in food technology and graphics.
- Good leadership and management are improving standards.
- Well organised accommodation and resources, and high standards of display provide a stimulating learning environment.

Areas for improvement

- There is some underachievement and lack of motivation in GCSE courses.
- There are not enough ICT resources to cover the full National Curriculum.
- The quality of teaching is variable and planning does not always meet students' individual needs.

151. All students in Years 7 to 11 have design and technology lessons. A rich range of experiences are offered, including work in food technology, textiles, resistant materials, electronics and graphics.
152. Year 7 students enter the school with very limited experience of working with materials and components. However, their achievement in the first three years is satisfactory and often good. The 2001 teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 showed attainment to be well below average. The present Year 9 work, although still below average, shows an improvement in standards. This improvement is due to good management and better teaching. Girls achieve higher standards than boys, as they do nationally. Students with special educational needs and English as an additional language enjoy the visual and practical aspects of the subject and make satisfactory progress, although no additional learning support is provided in lessons.
153. GCSE results in 2001 were below average but slightly better than the previous year. The graphics option provided the best grades, and many students performed well compared with their other GCSE subjects. In work seen, standards are showing some improvement in all areas of the subject. Students' achievement is satisfactory in relation to their attainment at the end of Year 9. The department analyses its GCSE results each year, and is developing strategies to raise standards. These include closely monitoring students, and starting coursework earlier to ensure its completion on time and to leave more time for examination revision.
154. Students in Years 7 to 9 develop a good understanding of the design process. They research and evaluate commercial products, such as protective clothing for food workers, or designs for CD covers, and follow clearly defined stages to design and make equivalent products of their own. Year 7 students design and make healthy oat, fruit, and nut bars. They compare the nutritional values of their 'crunch' bars with French bread pizza, and while their products are cooking they calculate the energy that the body uses during different activities. They weigh ingredients, and use tools and utensils with care. They work safely and hygienically, and understand the importance of healthy eating. Year 9 students make scale drawings of a CD cover before designing their own graphics for the sleeve label. They use geometrical instruments with some confidence; measurements are accurate, but lines do not always meet and the quality of presentation is below expectation for most students. Understanding of the use of ICT to design systems and control events is underdeveloped because the resources are not readily available.
155. Standards in Year 11 vary considerably between the different areas of technology. Students of graphic products develop ideas for package design. They are able to estimate thirty-degree angles when making freehand isometric drawings of toothbrush boxes. They have a good knowledge of a range of drawing methods, the use of colour, and the importance of balancing

light and dark areas. Their standard of free-hand drawing is high. In some food and resistant materials classes, on the other hand, the use of graphics for design sheets does not reach the same standard of presentation. Students' knowledge of the work of professional designers and the effect of technology on society is under-developed. Students research ideas, evaluate commercial products and are aware of the shortcomings in their own and others' designs, but many students are insufficiently creative in responding to design opportunities. They do not have enough opportunities to use the Internet to research industrial applications. Students understand the design process, and the idea of a design brief, but few students fully understand the meaning and use of a specification, or the underlying principles of good design.

156. Some underachievement in Year 11 is due to poor attendance, and a significant number of students are insufficiently motivated to complete the GCSE courses – not all do sufficient homework or independent research. Few students at this stage are taking real responsibility for their own learning.
157. Standards in Year 10 show some improvement over Year 11. Year 10 students have a better understanding of the work they are doing when, for example, they present the results of questionnaires and surveys on their families' use of DIY tools. They do this in two ways, firstly using bar charts drawn with geometrical instruments, and secondly using computer software to produce pie charts. They understand the processes involved and appreciate the advantages and disadvantages of both methods. Students work and behave well in lessons; most have positive attitudes and overall satisfactory progress is made by all groups of students including those with English as an additional language.
158. The quality of teaching is good overall, and varies from excellent to satisfactory. There is strong and sound teaching in all areas of the department. Good practice, more evident in some food technology and graphics products lessons, is based on extremely well planned lessons that have clear aims. The tasks and learning materials are appropriate for the full range of attainment, and students work at a good pace. In a very lively and effective graphics lesson, for example, the teacher used interesting diagrams of organic and inorganic objects, and three-dimensional models cut in half, to explain how to draw cross-sections accurately. The better teaching also includes question and answer sessions to assess individual students' understanding and reinforce learning. In all areas of the subject, teachers have good subject knowledge and plan well, but an occasional weakness is a lack of clarity about exactly what, and how, students are to learn. In some weaker lessons, the planning does not take account of the wide range of attainment in the class. This difficulty is compounded by the fact that there is no additional support for students with special educational needs or English as an additional language. The quality of lesson introductions and evaluative summaries varies considerably across the department, from highly effective, to just acceptable. In the well-structured projects, literacy and numeracy are fully integrated, and ICT is used to aid design and to enhance presentation.
159. The department is well led. Management is forward looking and there is a positive ethos towards continual improvement. Teachers, technicians, and trainee teachers from Goldsmiths College work extremely well together to provide a stimulating environment. All resources are well organised and maintained. Provision for students' health and safety is good. Satisfactory improvements have been made since the last inspection. Although there is no great improvement in standards, the quality of teaching has improved; assessment is linked to the National Curriculum; and students' progress is now satisfactory in all year groups.
160. The departmental development plan contains the correct priorities. These are: to raise standards; to make teaching more consistent; to develop assessment procedures by sharing National Curriculum and examination levels with students; to provide more opportunities for computer-aided design and manufacture; and to improve learning opportunities for students with special educational needs and language difficulties.

GEOGRAPHY

Overall, the quality of provision in geography is **good**.

Strengths

- The new head of department provides a clear educational direction, which gives teachers positive motivation and support.
- Teachers show enthusiasm for the subject and a commitment to improvement.
- Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and set high expectations.
- Good relationships and a concern to include all students create positive attitudes.

Areas for improvement

- GCSE results are lower than in some other subjects and are constrained by students' writing skills.
- There is a need to review and update the curriculum, assessment procedures and development plan.
- There is not enough practical work within and outside school, or sufficient access to computers for investigative work.
- The range of activities and tasks is occasionally not wide enough to meet the needs of all students.

161. Results in the 2001 GCSE examinations were well below average. Results have fluctuated over the last three years, without any clear trend of improvement. Students' results in geography are not as good as those they achieve in most other subjects. Fewer girls than boys choose to take GCSE geography. However, GCSE students achieve well in relation to their level of work when they were in Year 9.
162. In the work seen during the inspection, standards at the end of Year 9 are below average; as they were in teachers' assessments in 2001. Students achieve well in relation to their attainment on entry to the school. This is the case for boys and girls, students with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. Students in Year 7 start with limited skills in map work and in recording and presenting their work. They develop basic skills and routines of using titles, frames and annotation of maps and diagrams. In a Year 7 lesson on Hackney, for example, students successfully used data about the environment and converted this into bar and pie charts, using computers to present the graphs. Year 7 students know the functions of different settlements and can distinguish linear and nucleated settlements. High-attaining students effectively use six-figure grid references. Year 8 work shows an improved standard of presentation, with good use of titles and keys to maps. By the end of Year 9, students understand the economic development of countries and know which countries are less economically developed and which more so. They understand the ways that open cast mining can affect an area and high-attaining students successfully compare the advantages and disadvantages for the community. Some students can do this through the eyes of inhabitants such as a landowner, miner or conservationist. Through Years 7 to 9, students show an increasing understanding of the moral issues related to conservation.
163. Standards of work seen in Year 11 are below average and are better than recent examination results because the recently appointed head of department is now ensuring students make good progress in their examination lessons. All students across the ability range achieve at a good level in relation to their attainment at the end of Year 9. GCSE students build on the basic skills and knowledge gained in Years 7 to 9. Orally, Year 10 students show a good understanding of concepts about population, such as birth and death rates, infant mortality and natural increase. However, low literacy levels constrain their written work. Work is well presented, though some students copy work without understanding. Students have successful strategies for taking notes to support examination revision. However, many Year 10 and 11 students find analysis difficult, failing to link different aspects of topics to form a comprehensive overview. Year 10 students research the Internet to find the history and recent development of Docklands. They use their computer skills to select and download information for their assignments. Low-attaining students have difficulty cutting and pasting data from the Internet. The assignments on Docklands benefit from ICT use both in and outside lessons, but students have limited opportunities to use ICT for research or presentation of work. All students, including those with special educational needs, those for whom English is an additional language and different ethnic groups are well integrated into lessons and achieve well.

164. The quality of teaching is good, though there are some shortcomings. Teachers have a good knowledge of geography and apply it well. Learning is encouraged by high expectations of students' work and behaviour. Good, probing questions stimulate students' thinking and this is a strong feature of most lessons. For instance, in a Year 9 lesson on coal mining, good questioning enabled low-attaining students to consolidate and develop their understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of open-cast mining. Students give high quality oral responses, though their written responses are not as good. Literacy skills are developed through the correct use of technical words and the development of word glossaries. The amount of extended writing and writing for different audiences is limited, though Year 9 students wrote letters to the press on hedgerow conservation, putting forward the advantages and disadvantages of hedgerows. Students use their numeracy skills to do simple analysis of population data in Year 10. Teachers are sufficiently flexible in their teaching to meet the needs of students with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. On rare occasions, however, teaching is unsatisfactory because planning fails to meet the needs of the wide range of students in the class. Students with special educational needs receive very limited support in lessons from learning support teachers and at times this inhibits their learning, though they receive good support from their class teachers. Students respond well and their good attitudes promote their learning.
165. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The recently appointed head of department has identified areas for future development and has a clear sense of direction. The curriculum and assessment procedures are up-to-date with changes in the National Curriculum, though longer-term planning is needed to ensure more continuity in students' learning and greater ability to monitor their work. Fieldwork is under-developed and students need more first hand experiences of geography. Students' knowledge and understanding is better orally than in their written work, and this affects their examination results. Their written answers need to be improved through the use of 'writing frames'. A lack of access to ICT constrains the investigative elements of the subject and presentation of GCSE work. In planning lessons, teachers need to be more consistent in ensuring there is a range of tasks to meet the needs of all groups of students.
166. The progress made since the previous inspection has been good; the issues have been addressed and show improvements. There are recent signs that standards are rising and students' achievements are good. The quality of teaching and learning has improved; teachers show enthusiasm for the subject and a good level of commitment to improve standards.

HISTORY

Overall, the quality of provision in history is **good**.

Strengths

- Standards of achievement are improving.
- Teaching is good. It is well planned and structured to support students' learning.
- Teachers' good subject knowledge is used well to provide clear explanations.
- Students' positive attitudes and good classroom relationships promote good learning.

Areas for improvement

- There is potential for further improvement in examination results.
- There are not enough opportunities in lessons for students to take initiative, discuss and to learn in depth.
- Assessment in Years 7 to 9 is not reliably based on National Curriculum levels.
- Assessment records are not used sufficiently to track progress or to set targets for attainment.

167. Standards are below average, but students achieve well in comparison with their prior attainment on joining the school. In Years 7 to 9, and especially in Year 9, higher-attaining students reach standards which match the national average, and most others achieve standards which, while below average, are better than might be expected. GCSE results are below average but have improved over the last three years. In 2001, all students gained a GCSE grade. The work of students currently in Year 11 is at similar standard to the 2001 results, and in line with the school's target of 30 per cent A*-C grades in 2002. There is no significant difference overall in the achievement of different ethnic groups, or in that of boys and girls, though boys did better than girls in GCSE examinations in 2001. Students with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language achieve well. Their learning needs are met well in lessons, though the progress of students with special educational needs is sometimes hindered by a lack of specialist support.
168. Overall, students' knowledge of the topics being studied is sound, but their understanding is more varied. In Years 7 to 9, there is a significant difference in the standards achieved by higher-attaining students in the 'fast-track' classes, and those in the mixed ability classes. For example, in a Year 9 'fast-track' class, students' knowledge and understanding of the events and impact of the holocaust was good, and they were able to think widely in linking these to the persecution of the Jews in many countries over the centuries. While the knowledge of students studying the same topic in a mixed ability class was factually sound, their depth of understanding and grasp of concepts was significantly more limited.
169. There is a similar difference between students' skills in using historical evidence and in evaluating how useful it is. Higher-attaining students are confident in using evidence to find information, while others need much more guidance, and have little real understanding of the nature and significance of the sources being used. Higher and lower-attaining students have weaknesses in the critical use of historical evidence, though these skills are better developed in Years 10 and 11. This was shown particularly well in a Year 11 lesson where students were discussing the breakdown of relationships between the world powers between the Yalta and Potsdam conferences. They used their knowledge of the key issues and their understanding of the personalities of world leaders to make links and comparisons. They also used historical evidence effectively to distinguish opinion and judgements about past events. In all years, students have a sound ability to place events in a correct time frame and to empathise with people from past times.
170. Written work has strengths in factual accuracy and at its best, in explanation. Assignments often reflect sound research. Weaknesses lie in much work being too brief and lacking in detail, points made not being supported by evidence, and essays not being well structured, argued and concluded. Most written work is completed conscientiously, with higher-attaining students using ICT effectively to enhance presentation. Most students enjoy history, concentrate well in lessons and are keen to contribute and do well. Mostly they work independently but are supportive of each other. Good classroom relationships promote learning.
171. Teaching is good. In the ten lessons seen during the inspection it was good in five and very good in one. In other lessons it was satisfactory, apart from two where it was poor. The poor teaching is untypical of practice as a whole and is being addressed. Teaching is stronger in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 7 to 9. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to provide clear explanations, and to plan well-structured, focused lessons. Work is well matched to students' learning requirements. Their interest and understanding are fostered by methods that often relate the subject matter to their own experiences. For instance, Year 10 students were

helped to understand the complexities of hyperinflation in Germany following the first World War by a lively presentation which included references to 'betting odds' and the use of a £20 note to emphasise points. Similarly, low-attaining students in Year 11 were led to an understanding of the events leading up to the Cuban crisis by a clear explanation and skilful use of visual aids.

172. Teachers use questioning well to assess students' understanding, but questioning is rarely challenging enough to make students extend and develop their thinking. Students are involved in lessons, but their input is strongly directed and controlled by the teacher. Students have very little opportunity to take initiative, and while they are encouraged to discuss in pairs, these opportunities are rarely fruitful because they are not planned or guided. In part, this is a consequence of the pressure of time in lessons, but it results in students not having the opportunity to deepen their understanding through exploring issues for themselves.
173. Students' work is marked regularly. Marking is often thorough, but varies in the guidance provided to help students to improve their work. Sometimes a tendency to over-praise as a means of encouragement results in misleading comments. Procedures for the formal assessment of students' work are thorough overall, but are not soundly based on a clear understanding of the National Curriculum levels of attainment in Years 7 to 9. In all years, insufficient use is made of assessment records to track students' progress and set targets for improvement.
174. Standards and provision are improving, and this is largely due to the good leadership and management of the acting head of department, who is providing a clear direction until a new head of department is appointed in the summer term 2002. Teachers are guided and supported well. The work of the department is systematically monitored and reviewed, issues for improvement are identified, and effective action taken. Improvement since the last inspection has been good, especially in GCSE results, and in the quality of teaching, assessment, resources and accommodation. The use of ICT remains underdeveloped. With the appointment of a permanent head of department, and the clearly identified priorities for development, the subject is well placed for continuing improvement.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in information and communication technology is **unsatisfactory**.

Strengths

- Teachers are knowledgeable and committed.
- Students achieve well in Years 7 to 9.
- There are good plans for improving the range and accessibility of the computers.

Areas for improvement

- Attainment is well below average in Years 10 and 11.
- There is insufficient planning or support for students with special educational needs.
- The curriculum is not meeting the needs of the students in Years 7 to 9 or Years 10 and 11.
- The accommodation is cramped and resources are inadequate to fulfil the National Curriculum.

175. Standards in the 2001 GCSE examinations were well below average. However, the number of students gaining a grade was in line with the national average. Standards in the previous year were very low. It is not possible to judge how well standards are improving because, while all students study an examination course, not all students are entered for the examination. The proportion of students entered has changed from year to year. At the end of Year 9 in 2001, the teachers' assessments indicated that standards were well below average. The proportion of students reaching the nationally expected level in Year 9 has improved substantially over the last three years.
176. In work seen, standards at the end of Year 11 are well below average. Students are able to analyse simple financial data using a spreadsheet. They can create a simple database and sort

the results of a search. Higher-attaining students can create a poster by combining text, pictures and artwork from different sources. Most students can produce different types of business stationery using word processing or desktop publishing. However, in their study of business applications they have a limited understanding of the difference between an invoice and a credit note; some students confuse a credit note with a credit card. Students have a limited ability to assess the relative merits of different software to solve particular problems. Few students are able to merge data from a database using mail-merge. These standards represent satisfactory achievement since students came from a very low base at the end of Year 9.

177. Standards at the end of Year 9 are below average, but are continuing to rise because of improvements to the curriculum and good teaching. They represent good achievement in relation to the well below average knowledge and skills with which students enter the school. With help, most students can make good use of a spreadsheet or database to handle a range of, mainly business, data. Higher-attaining students are able to use their mathematical skills to check that their formulae are working correctly or to create a formula to, for example, reduce a value by ten per cent. Most students can use a multimedia program to create a poster or a series of screens of information. Students do not know how to measure or log data automatically or to use a computer control to events or a robot.
178. The specialist teaching is good overall and students generally enjoy lessons, working with determination and interest. Both teachers are knowledgeable and committed. About two-thirds of the teaching seen was good, with the best teaching seen in Years 7 to 9. It is better in Years 7 to 9 because teachers are more careful in these years to support students with lower attainment, who are then able to keep up with the others. Students with special educational needs do less well than other students, partly because of the way that the curriculum is taught in modules. For some students there is a large gap between when they study ICT in Year 7 and when this experience is repeated in Years 8 and 9. Students with special educational needs have individual education plans, but these are rarely used effectively and additional teacher support in the classroom is not often available.
179. Teaching is occasionally very good. In one Year 7 lesson, for example, the teacher used a clear and respectful tone to the students, carefully explaining both the homework and the class work. She took care to define technical terms and got students to explore their meanings. Students came from very varying ICT backgrounds, but were able to make good progress because they understood exactly what to do. Most students were able to follow worksheets, and the higher attainers were provided with work that enabled them to move at a faster rate. Students learned to enter data into various applications and were beginning to see connections between the various types of software. The teacher kept a good record of achievement and the students' folders reflected their stages of development. One student was able to explain how she moved from a Level 3 to a Level 4. In this lesson, a student with special educational needs was supported by an additional teacher. This teacher was also able to give support to other students and worked effectively with the class teacher. In general, lessons lack one or more of these very good features, especially in Years 10 and 11. In one Year 11 lesson, students became disaffected, partly because the material did not appear interesting to them and partly because the teacher did not provide work at different levels for students of differing ability. Their lack of interest showed in the way that they arrived late and had not prepared for the lesson. A large proportion of the class were well behind with their coursework. At all levels, teachers take care to treat all students equally and students from different ethnic backgrounds achieve equally well.
180. The curriculum is unsatisfactory and this is an important factor in constraining students' achievement. There is the problem of continuity in Years 7 to 9, when the school does not provide specific ICT lessons throughout the year. More importantly, the use of ICT in other subjects is unsatisfactory. Of the core subjects, only in English do students regularly use computers. This is mainly for word processing, but students use the Internet to explore topics for discussion, such as the use of the MMR vaccine. The science department does not use ICT and the important aspects of data-logging and measurement are missing. In other areas of the curriculum, such as art and modern languages, opportunities are missed and in design and

technology, students do not get an opportunity to use control technology unless they join the robotics club after school.

181. In Years 10 and 11, all students follow a GCSE course in ICT key skills and also have the option of a GCSE in office applications. All students are normally entered for the foundation level paper, which offers the maximum of a grade C. The courses have a major component of ICT but have a bias towards business applications. This does not meet the needs of students who do not wish to specialise in ICT or business. These students are being denied the opportunity to use ICT in a wider context to support their studies of other subjects or to stimulate their interest in other vocational areas.
182. The leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory. The ICT co-ordinator has made good plans to improve the level of computer resources, but plans for the development of the curriculum are unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator is also an acting assistant headteacher and in addition to his senior management duties he manages the computer network and the school's management information system, as well as giving other technical support. As a result, he is overloaded and the school's provision has failed to keep pace with both the demands of the curriculum and the need to improve attainment. Current plans do not include the development of ICT in National Curriculum subjects. In addition, the nationally funded training programme for ICT has not yet ensured that all teachers have the expertise and confidence that they need. The school's accommodation and resources are unsatisfactory. Although each department generally has one or more computers, these are not networked and booking a computer suite is very difficult because of the demands made by the examination classes. One of main the computer rooms is very cramped. It is difficult for all the students to see the whiteboard and the teacher is not able to demonstrate using a computer display.
183. The improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory, overall. Teaching has improved and there have been some recent improvements in the level of resources, but there is still a lack of technical support, which is placing a heavy burden on the co-ordinator. While standards are rising in Years 7 to 9, they have declined at GCSE and the curriculum is still not meeting the full requirements of the National Curriculum. Students generally enjoy ICT, although there is disaffection with the courses in Years 10 and 11, with a large amount of absence and failure to submit coursework on time. Providing that management responsibilities in the subject can be rationalised and that the school can improve the resources and staff development in ICT, there is a satisfactory potential for improvement.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Overall, the quality of provision in modern languages is **good**.

Strengths

- Leadership and management of the subject are good.
- All students have the opportunity to leave school with a qualification in a foreign language.
- Systems for assessing students' standards are good.

Areas for improvement

- Strategies to raise attainment need to be formalised into a development plan.
- Assessment data is not used enough to set students targets and monitor their progress.
- ICT is not used sufficiently to support teaching and learning.

184. GCSE results in French in 2001 were below average. While the percentage of students gaining A*-C grades was well below average, more students are entered for GCSE than is the case in many schools. For the third consecutive year the results showed good achievement in relation to students' prior attainment at the end of Year 9. Both boys and girls did well in French compared to most of their other GCSE subjects. More boys than girls gained A*-C grades. As an alternative to GCSE, some students are entered for a certificate of achievement. As a result the majority of students leave school with a qualification in a modern foreign language. Results

in German in recent years have been poor by both school and national comparison, although in 2001 students' made satisfactory progress from Year 9. The results in German reflect the school's difficulty in adequately staffing the subject since the last inspection. German has now been phased out of the curriculum.

185. By Year 9, standards of work seen in French are below average. Good teaching enables students of all abilities to reach National Curriculum levels that show good achievement from the time that they entered the school. There are no marked differences between the achievement of boys and girls, nor between that of students from different ethnic groups. The school's use of setting to create 'fast-track' groups enables higher-attaining students to reach average standards. Boys are better represented in these groups than is the pattern nationally. In these groups students' listening and speaking skills benefit from the teaching being done in the foreign language. As a result, students become used to the pace and pronunciation and hear common phrases regularly. In one Year 7 class, where the teacher is a native speaker, students already showed good levels of confidence and fluency in quick-fire question and answer sessions. In a Year 9 class, the students' response to the teacher's high expectations was seen in average levels being reached in all aspects of the language. Students in the higher-attaining groups can write about past events and produce short letters to pen friends about themselves, their home and Hackney.
186. In the mixed groups of average and lower-attaining students, standards are depressed by students' poor literacy skills when they enter school. Students make good progress through teachers' support and the methods they use. To reduce the amount of written work, teachers use visual materials and prompt sheets. There are not enough support staff to work with students who have special educational needs and this affects the learning of those students and the other students in the group.
187. By the end of Year 11, the standards of work seen in French are below average. Staffing problems when these students were in Years 7 and 8 meant that many students lost the first two years of their French studies. Consequently, students are still learning aspects of grammar and vocabulary that would normally have been covered by the end of Year 9. As a result some students of all abilities are very dependent on the teacher for guidance in all aspects of their work. In Year 11, students are in larger groups and have less time allocated than in other years. This affects their learning in the crucial examination year. Higher-attaining students use more complex sentences in their written work. At this level they use redrafting and do some interesting extended writing to compare Hackney and Haiti. Teachers are expert in preparing students for the GCSE examination and all students are gaining enough skills to pass. In written work, students are able to communicate the right message even though there is word-for-word translation from English and some elementary errors of grammar. Lower-attaining students being prepared for the certificate of achievement are working at a basic level of understanding using common everyday situations.
188. Teaching is good. A strong feature of all the teaching is the support and encouragement offered to compensate for many students' low self-esteem and weak literacy skills. Teachers praise effort and accuracy equally. At the end of a listening test with one group of low-attaining students, for example, the teacher thanked the group for trying. As a result, students do not feel inhibited in lessons. They are prepared to try answers and willing to ask questions and ask for help. The teachers' manner with students encourages them to meet high expectations and results in good behaviour and learning. Teachers have good personal language skills and normally challenge the students by teaching in French. In some groups, teachers compensate for students' learning difficulties by using English, and students then become dependent on the teacher rather than being challenged to try to understand. In these groups students' speaking and listening skills are weaker. Teachers regularly assess students' work. They are well supported by the department's assessment system. They involve students in recording their own results and in assessing their own work. As a result, students gain an understanding of their own learning and the standards of the National Curriculum levels. Teachers regularly set homework. Work is marked but there is inconsistency in the use of GCSE grades and National Curriculum levels. Marking identifies poor presentation, key language errors and non-completed

work, but these are not chased up and the opportunity to insist on high standards is missed. Teachers make good use of the foreign language assistant and GCSE students say that the small group work with her is improving their oral skills. Teachers regularly contact parents if there are concerns as well as to commend good work.

189. Students have good attitudes to language learning, and behaviour is good. Groups of higher-attaining students maintain their focus on work throughout lessons. They can talk maturely about their work. In Years 10 and 11, where the size of the group necessitates much individual and pair work, students are able to work independently. Students of all abilities co-operate well in pair work. Students in Years 7 to 9 are eager to participate.
190. The head of department shows good leadership through her own commitment and by personal example in her teaching. She has implemented the school's systems for monitoring teaching, homework and books to support other staff and to ensure consistency of approach. The department has adopted a good framework for its lesson planning and this now needs to be personalised to the needs and resources of the department. Systems of assessment are good and increasingly being used and understood by students. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. The department now needs to make greater use of the school's data on individual students to monitor progress, identify underachievement and to set targets for improvement. The use of ICT has been hindered by the school's limited resources and the delayed start to staff training. The department has identified strategies to raise levels of attainment and these need to be formalised in a development plan with clear time scales and review dates. The department is currently fully staffed with specialist teachers and this stability is benefiting students. The quality of display, which includes much students' work, makes the area attractive. The commitment of the head of department is shared by other members of the team. The department has the capacity to address the issues brought to its attention and to sustain and raise the contribution of modern foreign languages to the school.

MUSIC

Overall, the quality of provision in music is **good**.

Strengths

- There are good enrichment activities and very good provision for instrumental tuition.
- There is a good balance of skills and expertise amongst teachers and support staff.
- All groups of students are integrated well in lessons.
- There is shared commitment between the senior management and music staff for improvement.

Areas for improvement

- Students don't have enough information on how well they have done and what they should do to improve.
- There is not enough ICT equipment to enable all students to have access.
- Some teaching suffers from inadequate planning.

191. Most students enter the school at the age of 11 with very limited knowledge and skills in music. The proportion taking instrumental lessons is above average and this helps to raise standards in lessons. Standards in Years 7 to 9 are below those expected nationally. Standards are lower than at the time of the previous inspection, because attainment on entry to the school is now lower. However, students in all years are achieving well, which is an improvement since the previous inspection. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls or of students from different ethnic backgrounds. Students with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are well integrated in lessons and achieve well. On-going assessment is satisfactory, though students in Years 7 to 9 need to know better how well they have done and what they must do to improve.
192. While standards in Year 9 are below average overall, a small minority of students achieve average and above average standards. These students are supported in their learning by

instrumental tuition and opportunities to play and perform in school and in the community. In Year 9 lessons, all students play keyboards. Standards of playing with the right hand are average, but very few students are able to use both hands or read notation. Some students are able to memorise their melodies. Care is taken to choose music that both appeals to young people and is relevant to their experience of the music industry. In one Year 9 lesson, students listened and compared a piece of music with two contrasting re-mixes of the same piece. Students were enthusiastic in this lesson and learned well through co-operating and listening to each other. In a Year 7 lesson, higher-attaining students were able to compose a short pentatonic tune and almost half of students could add a drone. Lower-attaining students did not understand the construction of the scale but a few were able to compare two different styles of pentatonic compositions, for example a Chinese lullaby and an English folk song. Although staff encourage and praise students' work, performance skills of the majority of students remain weak.

193. GCSE results have fluctuated since the previous inspection and numbers are too small to be compared with national results. In 2001 there were twelve entries. One quarter of students gained A* - C grades and almost all students gained a pass grade. Uptake has been variable, but at present there are twenty-four students in Year 10 and eighteen students in Year 11. In Year 11, standards are below average overall, with a few students working towards average and above average standards in playing and performing. Most students are making good progress in preparing their practical work and recording their compositions, with very good technical support from a visiting teacher. Students in Year 11 are able to identify simple time signatures. A few are able to follow a percussion score and play an individual part. Most students use music vocabulary, such as 'chromaticism', 'ascending' and 'descending'.
194. Teaching is satisfactory overall and is good in Years 10 and 11. Teachers know their subject well and there is a very good balance of skills and expertise among the teachers and the visiting instrumental and technical staff. Appropriate practical activities challenge most students, including those with special educational needs. Teachers' planning is usually thorough, though it is not always detailed enough to ensure that higher-attaining students in Years 7 to 9 are challenged. Most students listen and behave well. Occasionally, however, insufficient planning and lack of additional support for students with special educational needs leads to students' responding poorly. Booklets to support lessons in Years 7 to 9 have recently been prepared to a good standard. The department is aware of the need to review the booklets regularly to ensure that the tasks are meeting the needs of all students. Arrangements for assessing students' work in relation to the revised National Curriculum have been put into place but they have not yet had an impact on students' learning or been used to create targets for improvement. Teachers give Year 10 and 11 students helpful feedback on their work. Most students at this level respond well and there is on-going communication between the department and parents.
195. Leadership and management are good. Teaching plans have been revised and meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. Music teachers and visiting teachers work very well as a team and meet regularly. The head of department keeps records of assessment but as yet does not use National Curriculum levels to determine standards. The department has a clear development plan, but funding is low and maintenance costs are high. The provision for ICT in the department does not meet the needs of all students in Years 7 to 9.
196. Improvement since the previous report is satisfactory. Standards of attainment by Year 9 are lower than last time, but the profile of students' attainment has changed considerably. The department is working hard to raise standards and encourage more students to participate in the good quality enrichment activities provided.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Some teaching is good or very good.

- Relationships between staff and students are generally positive.
- There are good opportunities for students to develop personal, social, and planning skills.

Areas for improvement

- Target setting for individual students' performance skills is still developing.
- The time allocated to physical education is not enough to cover the curriculum in depth.
- Assessment of GCSE theory does not provide students with clear targets for improvement.
- There are not enough opportunities to use ICT.

197. By the end of Year 9, students reach average standards in most areas of the physical education curriculum, and many are able to apply the techniques, skills and competition rules to areas such as cricket, athletics and orienteering. In cricket, students have sound catching and throwing skills, although their specific batting and bowling skills are below average. In athletics, they have sound co-ordination and mobility. Their technique in the shot put is below average, but a significant minority reach standards that are well above average. Standards in orienteering are well above average, with the majority of students being able to navigate and plot their course very well. The ability of students at the end of Year 9 to observe and analyse performance is still developing, but helps to improve their performance in some lessons. They are able to use planning skills in orienteering and are beginning to appreciate how different types of activity affect their fitness in different ways. Students' achievements in Years 7 to 9 are satisfactory.
198. GCSE results in 2001 were below average, although students did better in physical education than in their other subjects. Practical skills for students in GCSE groups are above average. The attainment of Year 11 students who do not take GCSE physical education is average.
199. Students' achievements in Years 10 and 11 are satisfactory. In the Year 10 GCSE course, students develop a sound understanding of the basic principles of fitness and training and a sound knowledge of anatomy and physiology. They learn how to measure and record performance accurately for other students in the group. Year 11 students are involved in both the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme and the Junior Sports Leaders' Award. They develop very good planning and leadership skills and are very successful at learning to work together to solve problems and achieve targets in activities such as camp-craft and orienteering.
200. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities and some fixtures with other schools, though participation rates are disappointing. Many students, however, achieve a very high standard in a range of sports and reach both county and regional level, as well as representing very good local clubs. The school is particularly successful in the 'Panathlon' – a schools competition covering many different sports – where they achieved second place nationally and involved well over a hundred students.
201. Students' attitudes to learning are good in all year groups. Many are enthusiastic, well behaved and co-operative, and demonstrate a real enjoyment of the subject. They are generally attentive and able to sustain concentration throughout the lesson. Relationships between students and with staff are usually positive and this is a significant factor in the progress they make. Opportunities for students to work independently are still developing. They are good in Years 10 and 11, where students undertake roles such as coach or official and many students participate in the Junior Sports Leaders' Award.
202. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. It is sometimes good or very good and was less than satisfactory in only one lesson. In the good and very good lessons a secure knowledge of the subject is conveyed to students through perceptive observation of their performance, appropriate intervention and good question and answer sessions. These lessons are well planned, with varied teaching methods and activities involving both individual and group learning; discipline and class management are very good. In the weaker lessons, expectations of students are not high enough and planning is not detailed enough. The range and type of activities is not appropriate and management of behaviour is sometimes ineffective.

203. Teachers regularly assess students' performance during lessons and use this to enhance learning, although students are only rarely encouraged to evaluate their own work. Students' achievement is recorded at the end of each unit of work, but the use of clear criteria for each activity and the involvement of students in setting their own targets are still developing. The assessment of GCSE theory work is unsatisfactory and does not provide students with appropriate information to make the necessary improvements to their work. Opportunities for students to have work marked in relation to GCSE standards are also limited. The volume and quality of GCSE work often does not reflect the ability of the students.
204. The curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. The balance of activities is generally appropriate in Years 7 to 9 but the range and depth of coverage of activities in Years 10 and 11 is restricting the appropriate development of performance skills. All students are involved in either the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, Junior Sports Leaders' Award Scheme, or a certificate of achievement. This has achieved a great deal in improving leadership and personal planning skills for many students, but it has been to the detriment of the development of performance skills and physical fitness. It is not a satisfactory preparation for post-16 leisure activities. The time provided in all year groups is insufficient to provide appropriate depth of coverage. Planning documents are reasonable although they are still developing and do not provide enough specific detail or relate to assessment procedures; nor do they provide opportunities for the use of ICT.
205. Management of the physical education department is good in many respects and the day-to-day organisation of the department is very good. Long-term planning and the educational direction for the department for the next few years are clearly articulated in a very good bid for the school to be awarded Sports College status. Procedures for analysing GCSE results are developing and the department is beginning to respond to lessons learnt from these results and to use data on current students to ensure that as many students as possible achieve their full potential in examinations. All members of the department are committed, are generous with their time and are good role models. They all have specific responsibilities and give good support to the head of department. The departmental handbook clearly identifies most policies and procedures. There are regular departmental meetings, although these lack a focus on teaching, learning and curricular development and there are not enough opportunities for the department to share good practice, particularly in their teaching. Accommodation overall is inadequate. The new dance studio and fitness suite are a valuable addition and are very well utilised, but the gymnasium is unavailable for three months of the school year because it is used for school examinations, and outdoor facilities are extremely limited, restricting choice of activities for students. Progress since the last inspection is good. Non-participants are now appropriately engaged in lessons and students in Years 7 to 9 are beginning to understand the importance of health-related fitness. However, the achievement of students in the practical aspects of the GCSE course is still significantly better than in the theory.