

INSPECTION REPORT

**BISHOP THOMAS GRANT RC SECONDARY
SCHOOL**

Streatham, London

LEA area: Lambeth

Unique reference number: 100638

Headteacher: Mr Louis Desa

Reporting inspector: Mr Martin Beale
19385

Dates of inspection: 18 – 22 November 2002

Inspection number: 249083

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Secondary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	11 to 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Belltrees Grove London
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Canon J P Devane
Date of previous inspection:	8 th May 2000

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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19385	Martin Beale	Registered inspector		What sort of school is it? 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?
9708	Sylvia Daintrey	Lay inspector	Community links	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?
23588	Charanjit Ajitsingh	Team inspector	English, English as an additional language, Educational inclusion	
6044	Roger Perkins	Team inspector	Mathematics	
15079	Tony Boys	Team inspector	Science, citizenship	
31685	Val Girling	Team inspector	Art	
11190	Winifred Burke	Team inspector	Design and technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
23324	Sylvia Greenland	Team inspector	Geography, history	
8052	Ken McKenzie	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
12408	Nicholas Mayfield	Team inspector	Music	
29510	Alan Frith	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
23268	Kevin Corrigan	Team inspector	Physical education, special educational needs	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is an average-sized mixed Roman Catholic comprehensive. There are 900 pupils between the ages of 11 and 16, with very many more boys than girls. The reputation and popularity of the school has improved in the last year and it is now over-subscribed. The school has suffered from high pupil mobility. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school has been falling for some time and many have low levels of literacy and numeracy. About 60 per cent of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, mainly of black-African or black-Caribbean heritage. There are also 27 refugee pupils mostly from Ecuador and seven traveller children. Half of the pupils have English as an additional language and 69 are at an early stage. The main languages spoken at home by these pupils are Spanish, Portuguese, Twi and Yoruba. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs, including statements, is above average as is the number entitled to a free school meal. The main reasons for higher levels of need are emotional/behavioural, moderate learning and specific learning difficulties. The school receives funding through the Excellence in Cities initiative which provides the finance for learning mentors, a learning support unit and a gifted and talented programme.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is improving rapidly under the strong leadership of the new headteacher and an effective team of senior staff, having been through a turbulent period in the recent past of high staff turnover and falling standards. It provides a good education for its pupils, and although costs are high, it provides satisfactory value for money. GCSE results have fallen and were well below average in 2002, although standards are now rising as a result of the high quality of much of the teaching and the very good attitudes of the pupils.

What the school does well

- Standards are above average in design and technology and pupils are making good progress in art, history and music.
- The pupils are keen, interested, work hard and behave well.
- A high proportion of teaching (over a third) is very good or excellent.
- The new headteacher has galvanised staff, parents and pupils through his high expectations, clear vision, drive and commitment to raising standards and improving the school.
- Very successful action has been taken to rapidly improve teaching, behaviour and attendance.
- Staff very successfully promote the pupils' spiritual development within the framework of Christian values.
- The strong partnership between school and home is instrumental in helping to raise standards.

What could be improved

- Overall standards are lower than they should be at GCSE.
- There are shortcomings in aspects of the curriculum in design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology (ICT) and physical education.
- Planning for the school's strategic development is not tightly linked to a long-term financial plan.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school had been through a period of decline in recent years, culminating in the departure of the previous headteacher. The new headteacher, who was appointed in September 2001, has already made a major difference. The decline has been halted, learning has been given a high priority and significant improvements have been made in a very short time. The major weaknesses in attendance, behaviour and attitudes highlighted by the most recent inspection report in 2000 have been robustly tackled and are much improved. Test and examination results have been following a downward trend, although inspection evidence indicates that they are likely to improve. Overall improvement since the last inspection has been good and is particularly rapid at present. The direction, drive and energy provided

by the new headteacher and the shared commitment of staff place the school in a strong position to improve further.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
GCSE examinations	C	D	E	B	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E

Test and examination results have been falling, a trend which is partly accounted for by a fall in the attainment of pupils on entry and the low levels of literacy of many. There is also evidence to show that many pupils have not achieved as well as they should have done in the past. The fall in National Curriculum test results for Year 9 pupils was halted in 2002 and although GCSE results fell further, they represented above average progress for the pupils from their earlier test results in Year 9.

National Curriculum test results for Year 9 pupils in English and mathematics improved in 2002, although results fell slightly in science. Results were well below average in each subject. They compared much more favourably with standards in similar schools. Results were above the average for similar schools in English and mathematics, and close to this average in science. Girls have consistently achieved better results than boys in English, although there has been no pattern to any difference in mathematics and science.

The gap in performance widens at GCSE and girls achieve much better overall results than boys. The falling trend in GCSE results continued in 2002 and the school's targets were missed by a considerable margin. These targets have been set at a very challenging level in 2003, representing the high expectations that staff have of the pupils. Entry levels were low in some subjects and a high proportion of the results were ungraded. In spite of this, these results represented good progress for the pupils from their earlier Year 9 test results. English was again the best of the core subjects; results in 2002 were close to the national average, but below average in mathematics and science.

The evidence from the inspection is that standards are rising, although older pupils are below where they should be because of the disruption earlier in their careers at the school. The vigorous action taken by staff is rapidly reducing this disadvantage and most pupils are now achieving at least as well as could be expected from their earlier test performances. Attainment in literacy and numeracy is improving, although standards are below average as they are in English, mathematics, science, geography and modern foreign languages. Pupils are mostly making satisfactory progress across the ability range, the exceptions to this being in art, citizenship, design and technology, history and music where progress is good. As a result, standards in design and technology are above average. The pupils identified by the school as having particular talents make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs are making satisfactory progress towards their identified targets, as are pupils with English as an additional language.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils show a great commitment to learning and are exceptionally positive in their attitudes to their work and to school. Older pupils are particularly

	impressive, bearing in mind the earlier disruption that they suffered.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good. Pupils move quickly and sensibly between lessons, helping to create a harmonious atmosphere in the school.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils collaborate well in lessons and establish very good relationships. Responsibilities are taken seriously, although some pupils do not show initiative or work independently.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory and improving rapidly. Punctuality to school and to lessons is good.

The pupils are keen to participate in extra-curricular activities and attend extra lessons in large numbers.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11
Quality of teaching	Good	Very good

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 has improved considerably in the last 18 months. Much is of a high quality, enabling pupils to learn well. Design and technology, art, history and music teaching is very good. Teaching in English, mathematics and science is good throughout the school. The National Strategy for teaching in Key Stage 3 has been implemented successfully and is supporting well the school's drive to improve literacy and numeracy. The best teaching is well planned, lively and interesting. In these lessons new skills are learnt rapidly; the pupils show a genuine interest and work hard. Teachers manage discipline in their classes very well, although this can be at the expense of encouraging independence. Homework is used very well to support and extend learning. Marking is helpful and informative, giving the pupils a clear picture of how well they are doing and steps to be taken to improve their work. Subject teachers meet the specific needs of pupils such as those with special educational needs or English as an additional language, as well as the gifted and talented, through careful planning and matching of work; however, the support provided by classroom assistants is not consistently effective as they are not always involved in planning and do not regularly take an active role throughout lessons with pupils who would benefit from their help.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad, balanced and planned to meet the needs of all pupils. It is enriched by a good range of extra-curricular activities and additional classes to raise achievement; however, the restrictions placed on trips and visits limit the history curriculum, and the lack of fieldwork is a weakness in geography.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The needs of pupils are carefully diagnosed but are not consistently turned into focused and measurable targets for improvement. The high level of support is not always deployed effectively in lessons.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Pupils who have English as an additional language are well integrated into normal classes. A small number of early learners of English are supported effectively, mainly in Years 7 and 8.

Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good provision is made for the pupils' personal development based on the Christian principles underpinning the ethos of the school. Spiritual development is very good and is a major strength of the school. Staff promote well the pupils' moral, social and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Procedures to monitor and improve attendance and behaviour are very good. Heads of year and learning mentors play a valuable role in supporting and guiding the pupils in their care.

Excellence in Cities funding is being used well to extend gifted and talented pupils and to guide and support others through mentoring. National Curriculum requirements are met, although insufficient use is made of ICT in many subjects. Food studies is currently not taught because of staff recruitment difficulties. Assessment information is used well as a tool to raise standards by guiding teachers' planning and identifying where pupils might need extra support. The partnership between school and home is very strong.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides strong, astute and very effective leadership and management. He has a considerable presence around the school and high expectations of staff and pupils.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors fulfil their responsibilities appropriately and have developed sensible processes to gain a clear overview of the work of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Test, examination and other data have been collated into a manageable form. Staff are starting to use this information to analyse the effectiveness of action taken and to identify where improvements are needed.
The strategic use of resources	Funding has been used well in the last two years to improve ICT facilities and the fabric of the building. The previously very high budget surplus has been reduced, but there is no financial forecast to inform long-term planning.

The headteacher is supported very well in the drive to turn the school around by an effective management team. The commitment to improve the school and raise standards is shared by staff and governors. Vigorous and successful action has been taken to improve teaching and behaviour and to raise standards. A development plan to assist the management of the next stages of the school's improvement is being prepared. Following high levels of teacher turnover, staffing has stabilised and, along with the accommodation, is satisfactory; learning resources are good. Satisfactory use is made of the principles of best value when purchasing goods and services.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children feel happy and secure. • The Christian values promoted by the school. • Expectations are high and teaching is good. • Their children are making good progress. • The strong leadership of the headteacher. • The strong link between the school and home and the quality of the information that they 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No significant matters of concern were raised at either the parents' meeting or through the pre-inspection questionnaire.

receive about their children's progress. • Staff help their children to become more responsible.	
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Parents are fulsome in their praise for the work of the headteacher and the improvement that they feel he has brought to the school. Inspection evidence confirms parents' very favourable views of the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The school has been through a turbulent period in the last five years, which culminated in the departure of the previous headteacher 18 months ago. The school's reputation and its popularity with parents both fell sharply during this period. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school has also fallen in recent years and is well below average. Many pupils enter with low levels of literacy; barely half of the current Year 7 achieved the standards expected for their age in English in their primary schools. Overall standards have also been affected by the comparatively large movement of pupils into the school after the start of Year 7 and often during Years 10 and 11. Many of these pupils had been unsuccessful in their previous schools and did not settle particularly well on their arrival. These factors have affected National Curriculum test results for Year 9 pupils and GCSE results, both of which have been following a downward trend over the last few years. There is also evidence from an analysis of examination and test results to show that many pupils did not achieve as well as they should have done and made below average progress while at the school. The deterioration in the school and the failure of staff to tackle the decline in standards of work, attitude and behaviour have left a legacy that the older pupils are striving hard to overcome.
2. National Curriculum test results for Year 9 pupils from 1997 to 2001 not only failed to keep up with improvements nationally but fell overall. Higher results in 2002 in English and mathematics have halted this decline, although science results fell slightly. In spite of these improvements, results in all three subjects were well below average. They compared more favourably with standards in similar schools. Against this benchmark, results in English and mathematics were both above average and science results were average.
3. There have been some variations in performance by gender in Year 9 tests since 1997. Girls have consistently achieved better results than boys in English, but not always by the same margin as nationally. There has been no pattern to any difference in mathematics and science. Nationally, boys do much worse than girls at GCSE. This is particularly significant here as there are now almost twice as many boys as girls in the school. The gap between the performance of boys and girls widens in this school at GCSE. Girls achieved much better results than boys in 2002, the gap in performance being much greater than in their earlier Year 9 tests. Raising the achievement of boys has become a major priority for the school within the general drive to raise standards. There were some slight variations in the attainment of different ethnic groups in 2002, but these were too small to be significant.
4. The improvements that have taken place in the last year are shown well by an analysis of the last two years' GCSE results. The 2001 GCSE results represented well below average progress overall from the pupils' earlier Year 9 test results. Boys in particular did much worse than could have been expected. The 2002 results, although lower than in 2001, represent above average progress for the pupils from their earlier Year 9 test results. Mobility played a significant part in the lower 2002 GCSE results. The proportion of pupils who joined the school after the start of Year 7 and achieved at least five grades at A*-C was much lower than for those who had spent five years at the school. A significant proportion of these later arrivals achieved one or no grades at this level. One problem that the school faced in 2002 was the high proportion of ungraded results or low levels of entry in some subjects. This was due in part to some disaffected pupils who attended irregularly and did not complete coursework requirements. This appears to have been tackled with some success, particularly through the school's emphasis on the importance of homework and the extra study sessions provided by staff.
5. There were some variations in the relative performance of different subjects at GCSE in 2002, although only in English language and literature were results close to the national average. Pupils achieved higher results in English (language and literature), drama and Spanish than in the

average of their other subjects, as they had also done the previous year. By contrast, pupils achieved lower results in art, science, geography, history and ICT than in the other subjects that they took, repeating the 2001 pattern for the last three of these.

6. The position in the school now is one of rapidly rising standards. This has become possible because of the improvements that have taken place in teaching, behaviour and attendance. Pupils now are making at least satisfactory progress, although from a low starting point. Because of earlier disruptions to the schooling of older pupils, the generally good learning that takes place in lessons is not always converted into better progress over time. Similarly, weaknesses in literacy and the weaker recall of some pupils means that although lessons are well taught, pupils' progress is not sustained at a high level over time. Gaps in background knowledge and skills also mean that teachers have to spend time revising and consolidating before moving on to new material. Standards are below average in English, mathematics and science throughout the school, but the pupils are achieving satisfactorily. Standards are below average in all other subjects, with the exception of physical education throughout the school, where attainment is close to that expected nationally, and in design and technology and citizenship where attainment is above expected levels. Attainment is close to expected levels by Year 11 in art, drama, history and music.
7. Strategies for teaching literacy are fully in place and are well documented. They are included in the schemes of work of all areas of the curriculum and are regularly used in the planning of lessons. The 'Catch up' programme is used well in Years 7 and 8 to enable pupils to make progress from lower than expected standards and to achieve in line with national expectations. Good literacy teaching is a feature of most lessons. Learning objectives are shared and every lesson emphasises key words and vocabulary at the start. Speaking and listening, reading and writing are practised in lessons.
8. The use and promotion of numeracy across the curriculum is good and pupils' standards of attainment are improving, although still below average. Teachers have profited from training and subsequent action to enhance the contribution from different subjects. There are examples in many subjects where number skills are promoted well. In science younger pupils tackle basic calculations on density but are prone to errors when dealing with decimals. Older pupils succeed in drawing and interpreting graphs of rates of reaction because the teacher's emphasis on numeracy is helpful. In geography pupils interpret cross-sections accurately and consider population statistics in work on sustainable development. They complete scale drawings in design and technology, determine angles in design work and measure materials carefully.
9. Pupils with special educational needs and with English as an additional language are making satisfactory progress in lessons; however, there is no detailed analysis of progress in terms of National Curriculum subject levels which would allow an analysis of individual progress over time. Gifted and talented pupils are catered for well and make good progress in their areas of expertise through well-constructed programmes of enrichment.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are significantly better than those reported at the last inspection, when they were described as being poor amongst a sizeable minority of pupils, especially in the younger age groups. Attitudes and relationships are now very good and pupils' behaviour and personal development are good. A very impressive feature is the commitment to their studies of the oldest pupils, who were in Years 7 and 8 at the last inspection, and their gratitude that their learning is no longer disrupted. They are very pleased that the headteacher has put in place clear and consistent mechanisms for managing discipline and that they are being taught by a stable team of staff. They are responding very well to these improvements.
11. Attitudes and behaviour were never less than satisfactory in all of the lessons seen during the inspection and were very good or excellent in nearly half the lessons. As at the last inspection,

they were better in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 7 to 9, but overall they were very good at both key stages. The vast majority of pupils are keen to learn and to work hard. There are no significant differences in attitudes between different gender, ethnic or ability groups. The pupils listen carefully to their teachers, although the listening skills of the older pupils are better developed than those of the younger. In response to the consistently good and often very good teaching, the pupils fully involve themselves in lessons and strive to improve their performance. This was seen, for example, in a GCSE drama lesson in Year 11 where the pupils understood very clearly what was expected of them and, through written guidance and class discussion, knew what they had to do to achieve the highest grades of which they are capable. They worked extremely well together in small groups to rehearse and develop their very effective dramatised responses to a poem about leaving home. They watched each other's group improvisations intently and evaluated them sensitively, guided by the highly skilled teacher. A similarly serious attitude to learning was seen amongst a small group of Year 7 boys who were withdrawn for a session in the learning support unit because of the difficulties they had in behaving acceptably in classrooms. They concentrated very hard on making notes about a film, in preparation for writing a review, and were highly motivated by the interesting material and by the rewards they could gain if they fulfilled their targets. Pupils with special educational needs are generally keen to learn and value the additional support offered both in and out of class. Those with emotional and behavioural difficulties are lively but handled well in class by teachers.

12. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are also of a remarkably high standard in the registration periods at the beginning and end of each day. In all classes across the school, the pupils use these times effectively and calmly to prepare themselves, in the morning for the start of the day and in the afternoon for their activities after school. These include booster classes and extra-curricular clubs which they attend in good numbers. Outside lessons and registration periods, the pupils move around the school in an orderly way. This is a significant improvement on the behaviour reported in the local education authority's post-inspection monitoring visit eighteen months ago. Pupils wait patiently and quietly even when there is no staff supervision, for example when a form tutor is unavoidably late for registration. The rate of exclusions at the school is broadly average. The number of permanent exclusions has halved since the last inspection but the number of fixed period exclusions has doubled. This is because of the firm line taken by the new headteacher in making his expectations clear. This has made a successful contribution to the rapid improvement in pupils' attitudes and behaviour. Many of the pupils involved have not re-offended but a small number of pupils do persist in challenging the authority of the school. Black-Caribbean boys are over-represented in the figures for fixed period exclusions, as they were at the last inspection and as they are nationally.
13. Relationships between all groups of pupils are very good. There is a harmonious atmosphere in the school. The older pupils comment that the occurrence of bullying is much reduced, with only the occasional incident now taking place which is dealt with effectively, not least by those pupils from Years 8 to 11 selected to be 'bully buddies'. The pupils treat all adults in the school with respect. They are responding well to the increasing opportunities to undertake responsibilities, for example helping teachers in classrooms, reading out prayers in form assemblies, carrying out receptionist duties in the entrance hall, acting as library monitors or being a year representative on the school council. The thirty or so prefects selected from Year 11 make a valuable contribution to the organisation and support arrangements available at breaks and lunchtimes and act as very good role models, particularly for the younger pupils. Pupils' views, for example about catering arrangements and the state of the toilets, are listened to through the school council system, but many pupils do not yet have the self-confidence and maturity to express themselves clearly in a public forum. The opportunities for pupils to make choices and take responsibility for their own learning and development have understandably been restricted by the high priority placed by the senior management team on ensuring a return to a safe, well-ordered school community. Many pupils are now ready to move on to the next stage in their personal development.
14. Attendance is satisfactory and improving rapidly. Improving attendance was a key issue of the school's first inspection in 1996. At the last inspection, the attendance rate had improved and was slightly below the national average but punctuality was poor. Attendance fell again in 2000/01 to below 90 per cent. The school then put in place a series of rigorous measures which have

resulted in considerable improvements. The attendance rate rose last year to be in line with the national average, and unauthorised absence has reduced from an average rate to one that is well below average. There are now only isolated incidents of truancy. Punctuality is now good, with the vast majority of pupils arriving on time at the start of the day and for lessons. This is an impressive achievement and contributes to the good progress that most pupils are now making. One remaining weakness is the attendance of pupils of white Irish and British heritage. This has improved slightly since the last inspection but is still below 90 per cent and significantly lower than any other ethnic group.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

15. There has been a dramatic improvement in the quality of teaching and learning since the previous inspection in 2000 and the review of the school by the local education authority the following year. Much of this can be accounted for by the stability of staffing, the considerable improvement in behaviour and the sharp focus by staff on improving teaching and learning. The core of experienced staff who have helped to see the school through its difficult times are now able to focus on their own teaching rather than having to give support to large numbers of temporary staff. Very little teaching is less than satisfactory and one-third is very good or excellent. Teaching is slightly better in Years 10 and 11 than lower down the school and is resulting in very good learning.
16. One factor that has made a significant impact is the successful implementation of the structure to lessons recommended by the Key Stage 3 Strategy. Staff have embraced its features well and use the strategy to good effect particularly in their planning, although some further refinements are needed, such as improving the impact of plenary sessions. Literacy and numeracy are promoted well in subjects. Teachers are clear about what they intend the pupils to learn, and structure their lessons well to support the systematic development of skills. For example, teaching and learning were well-structured in a Year 7 lesson on Gamelan music, so that the pupils moved from one point to the next when concepts had been clearly explained, tested and reviewed. Learning intentions are often discussed with the pupils so that they have a clear understanding of the purpose of the lesson and the activities. All of the features of good planning were particularly evident in a Year 9 French lesson where the teacher built up a good level of challenge for the higher-attaining members of the class through suitably adapted activities. As in this lesson, the pupils usually rise to the challenge and high expectations of the best teaching. For example, as a result of clear lesson objectives and a thorough explanation of the teacher's high expectations, the pupils in a Year 11 art lesson were very clear about what to do and started their work confidently. The teacher also moved around the class during the lesson giving very good guidance and encouragement, and inspiring the pupils. This guidance is also supplemented by the marking of pupils' work, much of which is constructive and informative. It not only gives the pupils a very clear indication of how well they are doing, but also the action that they need to take to improve their work.
17. High expectations are in many cases a reflection of the teachers' good knowledge of what they teach. This was evident in the very good pace to learning that was generated by the high expectations and very high level of expertise of the teacher in a Year 10 graphics lesson. Some of the very best lessons are taught by teachers who not only have a good command of the material, but also show much enthusiasm for the subject. This helps to generate considerable interest amongst the pupils as well as a genuine desire to succeed. The teacher's enthusiasm was infectious in a Year 8 lesson as the pupils designed footwear. The pupils were very purposefully involved, collaborating in small groups and supporting each other well. Enthusiasm was also the key to a lively mathematics lesson in Year 10 on factorisation where the teacher was particularly skilled at drawing out ideas from the pupils and then building on them. On some rare occasions the pace of learning can slow down because teachers talk for too long, require little of the pupils such as copying from a book, or do not involve pupils in the learning process through discussion and questioning.
18. One other feature of the most successful lessons is that the teachers maintain good discipline so that learning can proceed without interruption. The pupils know and understand what is expected of them and respect this because many see it as a major improvement in the last few terms. They

feel secure because their teachers provide boundaries within which they can operate. Expectations for the completion of homework are particularly high. Homework is used to good effect by many teachers to consolidate and extend learning. The headteacher has placed great emphasis on the importance of homework and has successfully gained the support of parents in ensuring that their children complete work set on time. The firm control exercised by staff is understandable, given the previously reported poor behaviour in the school, but does have one negative effect, which is that pupils do not always develop the skills of independent study and collaboration. This was manifested in one or two lessons when the teachers tried unsuccessfully to get the pupils to undertake discussion and activities in small groups. On these occasions the pupils could not organise themselves and squabbled over who should do what.

19. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language are well catered for by teachers who provide a range of activities to ensure that they are included in lessons and make progress; however, classroom support is not always used to good effect in cases where learning assistants provide individualised support rather than general support for all pupils who require it. Classroom support for statemented pupils is provided for all who need it and is very effective. The support for the two visually impaired pupils is excellent. The committed and knowledgeable special educational needs teachers prepare interesting and stimulating lessons, allowing pupils to make progress in spelling, the use of dictionaries and listening.

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

20. The quality and range of learning opportunities provided by the school are satisfactory. The pupils have equal access to all curriculum areas. The range of extra-curricular activities is good. A wide range of sporting and musical opportunities is offered, along with enrichments such as a chess club. Booster and catch-up classes are well targeted for those pupils who need them. Gifted and talented pupils have very good provision through the Global Graduates programme. They are encouraged to aim higher by being given opportunities to visit universities and to receive mentoring from undergraduates. The local further education college works alongside the school to provide vocational courses in art and design, construction and leisure and tourism. The school recognises that more work-related learning opportunities are needed for those pupils who cannot cope with the demands of the National Curriculum. Recent changes to the timetable, banding and setting arrangements have allowed for greater flexibility in teaching the curriculum. The shorter lessons have particularly benefited pupils with low concentration spans, although single lessons are rather short for developing practical work. Good attention has been given to the implementation of the Key Stage 3 strategy, with teachers using the three-part lesson structure to help pupils learn. The cross-curricular teaching of literacy and numeracy is good. The school has a good, well-prepared programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE) that includes a satisfactory careers education and guidance programme.
21. There are some shortcomings in that the school fails to meet statutory requirements for the use of control technology as part of the design and technology curriculum, and the cross-curricular provision of ICT within subject areas such as music. Furthermore, the time allocated to physical education is below that recommended and limits teaching in the subject. The lack of food technology, because of staff recruitment problems, is also of concern. Currently there is no fieldwork offered in geography and no visits out of school in art and design and history. These were abandoned to reduce the disruption caused in school by the large number of lessons that were taken by supply staff. Now that the staffing situation has stabilised trips and visits are to be re-instated.
22. Teachers are aware of the requirements of pupils with special educational needs and provision in subjects is good, particularly in supporting literacy in Years 7 to 9, GCSE coursework and in developing social skills; however, the use of learning support assistants could be better considered and the individual education plans made more specific to different subject areas. The needs of pupils with English as an additional language are known and provision is satisfactory overall, with

good provision in design and technology. Some pupils do not always receive sufficient support because of the deployment of special educational needs staff to the core subjects, and English as an additional language support staff to humanities. Improvements in this area can be achieved by co-ordinating more general support in the classroom, rather than assistants being attached to individual pupils.

23. The school maintains very good links with the local community through the local parishes. The attendance by parents at curriculum evenings is excellent. The school also has very close links with the Latin American and Goan communities. These result in special events being hosted by the school.
24. The relationships with partner institutions are good. Links with Roman Catholic primary feeder schools ensure smooth transition to the school. Links with the sixth form Roman Catholic college are also strong. Very good links have been established with initial teacher training colleges to the benefit of both post-graduates and school pupils. Pupils in design and technology also benefit from special opportunities such as those offered by the Design Council.
25. The school makes good provision for the pupils' personal development. It promotes their spiritual development very well. The life of school is centred on a mission statement that enshrines strong Christian values, which run through all aspects of school life. Worship is central to this, through regular assemblies, prayers during form time and services. Mass is celebrated in the traditional way but also to reflect the Nigerian and Spanish cultures of many pupils. Many lessons start with prayer. Pupils also have good opportunities to reflect on their spirituality through art and drama. Moral education is strong in the school and this is particularly evident in the attitudes and behaviour of the pupils. The teaching of sexual morality in religious education and the bully buddy system make important contributions. A clear moral framework is set in lessons and this is particularly evident in modern foreign languages. The drama curriculum includes issues such as bullying, sexism and prejudice. The school provides good opportunities for social education. Pupils learn about the needs of others and take responsibility through charity collections, the prefect system and leadership training. Social development is well integrated into some lessons such as modern foreign languages, although opportunities for group work are not taken up in history and music. There is a good range of opportunities for pupils to celebrate their cultural traditions and learn about those of others, supported further by the wide range of languages taught in the school. There is a good range of cultural activities including free lessons in steel pan playing, lunchtime clubs in Chinese and Latino dance as well as visits to the theatre and regular productions and performances. Pupils learn about the art, music and cultures of the world.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

26. At the last inspection, the school had a well-established system of pastoral care which was not working effectively because of staff absence and changes. The majority of the key issues arising from the report were directed at the actions needed to improve attendance, punctuality, behaviour and the support of pupils at risk of low achievement and disaffection. The school has made excellent progress in dealing with all these matters. Staff, parents and pupils are overwhelmingly relieved and pleased that the problems which they experienced at first hand have been largely overcome in a very short space of time, thanks to the leadership and drive of the new headteacher and the commitment and dedication of all members of the pastoral team. The pupils now feel safe and are happy to come to school, knowing that their learning will not be disrupted. The care provided for them is consistently good, with particular strengths in the procedures for monitoring and improving attendance and behaviour. All groups of pupils are now well supported and guided to help them raise their achievement.
27. The school has put in place with exceptional rigour and consistency a series of very effective measures to improve the pupils' attendance, punctuality and behaviour. Senior staff, including the headteacher, are deployed to be constantly vigilant and to take rapid and continuing action on individuals not complying with the clearly set expectations. They are visible around the school at the change of lessons, at the start and end of the school day and at breaks and lunchtimes. The

high visibility of senior staff and frequent spot-checks of lessons have helped to promote a calm and purposeful atmosphere. Good use is made of external agencies such as the Education Welfare Officer, the Lambeth Behaviour Support Team and the African Caribbean Mediation Service. The system of incentives such as merits, certificates, rewards and sanctions is effective as an encouragement for pupils to behave well. This is fully understood by pupils, implemented consistently by staff and supported by parents. The appointment of administrative staff to keep detailed and accurate computerised records so that pupils' attendance, punctuality and behaviour can be frequently and closely monitored is effective as is the swift contact with and involvement of parents as soon as an attendance or behaviour issue arises.

28. The procedures for assessing and monitoring academic performance are good. The school now has detailed and extensive policies to raise pupils' achievement through assessment, and departments regularly audit their work in this respect. The quality of marking has improved since the last inspection. The pupils' work is now regularly marked according to generally consistent standards. Assessment is particularly good in art and design where opportunities are provided for the pupils to assess their own work and their progress is clearly plotted. Teachers make good use of assessment in English, design and technology, geography, history and modern foreign languages; however, assessment is inconsistently used in some areas such as mathematics and ICT. The school is aware that more consistency could be achieved in the use both of assessment information and of the considerable data that is now available to staff on pupils' attainment and progress.
29. There is now a stable and effective team of heads of year who make very good use of the knowledge that they have of the pupils and their families and work with the school's extensive monitoring and tracking systems to identify pupils who are underachieving against given criteria. For example, the current priorities for targeted support are those pupils in Year 11 who are at risk of not achieving five A*-C grades at GCSE and those in Year 9 who, with extra help, are capable of achieving the higher levels in the National Curriculum tests. The school runs an impressive programme of booster and revision classes and coursework clinics for these pupils. It makes much better use than at the last inspection of the wide range of strategies at its disposal to provide support and guidance for pupils. For example, it has devised an effective system for ensuring a coherent programme for individuals. The learning mentors funded by the Excellence in Cities initiative are notably successful in helping to raise standards; for example, in their analysis of the school's GCSE results for 2002, they found that 82% of those pupils who had been mentored improved on their mock examination points score. The pupils' personal development is very well supported by the lay chaplain who runs weekend residential courses in prayer and leadership for potential prefects and also trains pupils to be 'bully buddies' and to lead class assemblies.
30. The support for pupils with special educational needs is good overall; however, the school does not meet the requirements of the SEN and Disability Act 2001 in respect of accessibility. The school has established very good links with relevant external agencies and with feeder primary schools, enabling pupil needs to be identified early on and appropriate, wide-ranging support planned and implemented. The setting and review of individual education plans (IEPs) for pupils with special educational needs is thorough and based on excellent information gathering; however, pupil targets are far too general and do not focus on clear, measurable outcomes which can be used to measure progress and achievement. The department is now working on including subject-specific targets in pupils' IEPs and this is welcomed. Pupils with English as an additional language are supported well. Their needs are assessed on entry and steps identified to enable them to gain language skills as rapidly as possible. The small number of pupils from traveller families are supported effectively and sensitively within the school so that most are expected to fulfil their potential at GCSE. The pupils identified as gifted and talented benefit from a very good programme run under the Excellence in Cities initiative.
31. Arrangements to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety are good. Key staff, such as the designated teacher for child protection, the premises manager and the first aiders, are well trained and experienced in their roles. There are good procedures for recording and monitoring accidents, and parents are kept very well informed. There are a few health and safety issues arising from the

condition of the accommodation, for example the boys' toilets. The school is appropriately updating its health and safety policy and should now conduct a similar review of its policy for school journeys and educational visits.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

32. Parents are overwhelmingly pleased with the work carried out at the school and with the vast improvement that the new headteacher has brought about. They are fully supportive of the headteacher's tough but fair stand on discipline and the high expectations. They express great levels of satisfaction with the progress that their children are making, the quality of teaching and the care and support their children receive. They believe the school caters very well for all the different cultures and backgrounds of the pupils and are very content with the Catholic values which permeate the school. They feel that the reputation of the school has improved and would now wholeheartedly recommend it to other parents.
33. The school has very good arrangements for informing and involving parents in their children's learning. For example, at the beginning of each year, parents are invited to attend a curriculum evening for their child's year group in which they are given clear and honest explanations of what is expected of the pupils in terms of school work, homework and behaviour. These meetings are extremely well attended. Very good written information is provided in the booklets accompanying the meetings and in the attractive newsletter which is posted to parents each term. Parents are very well involved in signing their child's planner, which they do because they know that these are frequently checked by staff. They receive regular reports on their children's progress through a detailed tracking sheet which informs them each term of the levels or grades which the pupils are achieving in each subject alongside their end of key stage targets. Annual reports are of good overall quality, although individual subject reports vary in the consistency of information provided. Staff in the modern foreign languages department directly ensure that parents whose first language is Spanish or Portuguese have access to the information that they need. Parents of pupils who have any difficulties meeting the school's expectations, or who are referred to any of the support agencies available to the school, are very swiftly and consistently informed and involved. This is much appreciated by the parents and ensures that they can make an effective contribution to the raising of standards in work and behaviour.
34. A small core of parents has responded well to the school's efforts to re-establish a Parent Teacher Association. The school has made a good start in surveying parents for their views so that these can contribute to the school development plan. The school is rightly aware of a number of areas for improvement in its communications with parents. These include the need to respond in an even better way to parents' calls when they leave messages; the need to establish better links with parents of white Irish and British heritage; and the need to ensure that the prospectus and governors' annual report include all the information that is statutorily required.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

35. The headteacher is a very strong leader. It is through his drive and effort, ably supported by an increasingly effective team of senior staff, that rapid and considerable improvement has been secured in a relatively short space of time. His boundless energy, enthusiasm and commitment to the school have rubbed off on staff, pupils, parents and governors. He has high ambitions for the school and high expectations of pupils and staff. His presence around the school and his influence on its work are tangible. There is a core of strong and capable managers who are being given good direction, but are also being enabled to show initiative. There is a very clear and shared direction and commitment to improving the school.
36. Change and improvement are managed well. A wide range of appropriate and effective systems, strategies and procedures have been successfully adopted to support the drive to raise standards. These include the appointment of an assistant headteacher to co-ordinate work in this area. The

procedures adopted to monitor the work of staff and of departments and to improve teaching have met with considerable success. Line management procedures whereby the work of departments is held to account are clear, effective and well understood. All these processes enable senior staff to gain a good picture of the school's strengths and the action needed to secure improvement. As a result of the difficulties experienced by the school in recent years, formal arrangements for managing the performance of teachers have fallen behind the national timetable. Steps have been taken to introduce the required procedures and they are starting to contribute to the effective management of staff. One area where more careful monitoring is still needed is in the deployment of classroom support staff.

37. The amount of data available has grown considerably and is now in a manageable form on the computer network. The analysis and use of the information that this facilitates is developing well. The potential as a management tool for evaluating effectiveness and setting targets for improvement is fully understood, and action is being taken to ensure that staff are given guidance in how it can be used most effectively for evaluating their work and raising standards.
38. Much of the direction of work for the last four terms has been to bring stability to a declining school. Clear short-term priorities such as improving behaviour, attendance and teaching were identified and acted upon rapidly by the new headteacher. This was achieved successfully without the benefit of a comprehensive development plan. With stability secured, the headteacher has rightly recognised the need to plan more strategically for the systematic improvement of the school. A process of wide consultation to identify key priorities is under way and a new development plan is emerging. Its priorities are appropriate given the current position of the school, retaining the sharp focus on improving standards, particularly in literacy. The school had been operating with a large budget surplus through careful and prudent management of finances, which had grown to a high 11% of annual income. This has been reduced considerably by spending on ICT facilities and improving the poor state of repair of the buildings. There is no long-term financial plan to show how income is likely to change and the implications that this will have for possible future expenditure and development. Now is the time to undertake this alongside the preparation of the new school development plan so that priorities can be fully supported by the allocation of funds. The principles of best value are used satisfactorily and the current consultation over the future direction of the school is a welcome extension of their use. Specific funding, such as that for Excellence in Cities is used particularly well.
39. Governors have developed secure procedures to ensure that they oversee the work of the school and they are becoming more effectively involved in helping to shape its future direction. Link arrangements are starting to bear fruit. This improvement was overdue, as they allowed the decline in the school under the previous headteacher to go unchecked for too long. A small core of governors took on significant responsibility following his departure and successfully helped to prepare the ground for the new headteacher.
40. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very well led and managed. Records are maintained well and there are good structures in place for gathering information from subject staff, particularly in identifying the need for social and basic skills. A weakness is that the governing body does not monitor the progress of pupils, although procedures are now in place to ensure that the governor responsible is provided with the relevant information on the allocation of funding, standards achieved by the pupils and the effectiveness of the relatively high level of learning support.
41. School documentation includes comprehensive policies relating to new staff and training teachers. Procedures for the induction of new staff, including newly qualified teachers are good. Procedures are carried out effectively. The school is committed to training new teachers, and graduate trainees are well supported at senior management level and by departmental colleagues. Supply teachers receive good support and guidance from the departments in which they work.
42. The match of teaching and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is satisfactory overall. Teachers are appropriately qualified and most are experienced in the subjects that they teach. Nevertheless, there are concerns about continuity with the high proportion of supply teachers in

the ICT department, with one long-term and one new supply teacher in place during the inspection, and in the physical education department where two of the four members of the department were supply teachers. In design and technology there are no food or textile specialists, which narrows the curriculum on offer in the department. In the art department there is no technician support for teachers, and overall the deployment of support staff should be reviewed with a view to improving efficiency. There is a good range and number of experienced learning support assistants who are effectively managed; however, their monitoring, evaluation and continuing professional development requires attention.

43. Accommodation is satisfactory overall. It is very good in art, and the Learning Resource Centre is well staffed and very well equipped, particularly with computers. In most other subject departments accommodation is at least satisfactory and often good. The three main ICT rooms are well equipped and include projection facilities. The design and technology areas are about to be refurbished. Although the physical education department has appropriate indoor facilities, there are no pitches for outdoor games, which restricts the curriculum.
44. The availability of learning resources is good overall. There are adequate textbooks in all subjects and pupils can usually take them home for homework activities. The number of computers has recently increased significantly and is now just ahead of the national average for a school of this size. All machines have Internet access. The Learning Resource Centre is well equipped with books and computers. ICT resources to measure, record, respond to, control and automate events are currently inadequate. This adversely affects the school's ability to cover the whole of the ICT curriculum. The impending refurbishment of the design and technology area will overcome many of these problems.
45. There is now strong and effective leadership and clear management strategies to identify and deal with any shortcomings. Much teaching is of high quality. Recent improvements have been secured at a high financial cost. The school provides satisfactory value for money and is well placed to improve further.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

46. To continue the rapid progress made over the last four terms and to raise standards further, the school should:
 - 1) Raise standards at GCSE by continuing the drive to improve teaching and tackling the specific areas for improvement identified in the subject reports. The school should seek to introduce procedures whereby the good practice in many areas is shared and in particular (paragraphs 71, 72, 76, 77 and 118)
 - Ensure a more effective division of time between activities in mathematics lessons
 - Teach investigative and experimental science in greater depth
 - Ensure that the target language is used more consistently in lessons in modern foreign languages
 - 2) Tackle shortcomings in the curriculum, in particular (paragraph 21)
 - Increase teaching time for physical education to recommended levels
 - Plan consistent opportunities for pupils to use ICT in all subjects
 - Reintroduce fieldwork in geography and trips and visits in history
 - Re-instate food studies and complete the plans for the introduction of computer-aided design and computer-aided manufacture as part of the aspects taught in design and technology
 - 3) Complete the improvement plan so that it provides a strategic view of the school's development with clear priorities and measurable targets linked tightly to a long-term financial plan. (paragraphs 38 and 39)

Other issues which should be considered by the school

47. In addition to the items above, the governors may wish to consider the inclusion of the following points in their action plan:
- Use the flexibility now allowed to introduce further vocational and work-related elements into the curriculum for pupils in Years 10 and 11 (paragraph 20)
 - Complete arrangements for the formal performance management of teachers (paragraph 36)
 - Monitor the deployment and effectiveness of staff who support pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language. (paragraphs 22, 42, 54 and 55)

COMMUNITY LINKS

48. The school has good links with the community and other institutions. These are used effectively to enrich the experiences provided for pupils and to enable them to gain a wider understanding of life outside school. With its reputation restored, the school is now well placed to extend its links further, as outlined in the draft school development plan.
49. There are many examples of good community links, some of which have been described earlier. Other significant features include:
- visitors from the African and Caribbean communities, such as storytellers, playwrights and poets, who enhance the curriculum in English
 - involvement in a summer project run by Tate Britain which enabled ten Year 10 pupils to explore new techniques and exhibit their work under the guidance of a professional artist
 - links with theatres all over the country which enrich the provision for drama and provide opportunities for pupils to perform in London theatres such as the Young Vic
 - visits to local leisure and tourism venues which benefit not only the pupils studying for an accredited qualification in Key Stage 4, but also pupils in the learning support unit who are being encouraged to think about what they can do for community organisations
 - involvement in a flexibility project run by Lambeth College which enables 25 pupils to spend one day a week at college studying for a vocational qualification in engineering, construction or applied art and design
 - visiting speakers, including from the local Connexions service and the main sixth form college, to explain to pupils the possibilities of education, training and employment available to them when they leave school
 - opportunities for pupils to visit a range of higher education and medical institutions so that they are encouraged and inspired to aim for the top, whatever their background
 - the use of a residential centre near Portsmouth where the school's lay chaplain runs weekend courses for potential prefects in prayer and leadership
 - liaison with a designated police officer who contributes to lessons about personal safety, rights and responsibilities and drug awareness and works with the school as part of the local multi-agency "safer schools partnership"
 - the support of local residents now that the school site is secure and the senior staff patrol outside the gates at the end of the school day
 - involvement of the headteachers of two feeder primary schools on the governing body
 - a programme where Year 5 pupils from one of the main feeder primary schools come in for science lessons given by the school staff.

There are several areas where further improvement could be made. These include:

- re-establishing a programme of fieldwork in geography and visits in history and religious education
- enabling school staff to visit primary schools so that they can see at first hand what prospective new entrants are achieving

- establishing links, for example through the Internet, with schools in different localities such as rural Britain or other countries
- establishing direct links with businesses
- providing more opportunities for pupils to undertake community service as part of the citizenship programme, building on the Christmas party for older residents currently being planned by the school council.

THE PROVISION FOR AND STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS WITH ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

50. Satisfactory provision is made for pupils with English as an additional language. Most pupils acquire sufficient language skills to function well and they are well integrated into the mainstream. Their achievement is satisfactory throughout the school.
51. Most subject teachers have good strategies for meeting the pupils' general needs; however, there are few opportunities in lessons for supported speaking and listening for those who are at a more advanced level. They sometimes struggle to do justice to their academic potential for developing understanding and skills in subject-specific language, particularly in the core subjects. This slows down their progress. Induction support on a withdrawal basis for a very small number of pupils works well to help them settle in school and to learn basic English. Specialist support in mainstream classes is satisfactory where available, but it is not consistent.
52. Teachers and support staff who are mostly bilingual, use their first language well when working with pupils. The use of the first language and resources such as bilingual dictionaries and occasional use of peer or buddy help all contribute to the progress that the pupils make. The pupils develop their speaking and listening skills well and are growing more confident in reading and recording their work using phrases and words as a result of good learning support provided for each pupil. The induction of new pupils is good. In a history lesson observed in Year 9, the bilingual assistant had planned well and prepared a bilingual resource sheet to take account of the needs of three new pupils with little English, and used it effectively with a bilingual dictionary enabling pupils to understand the link between poverty, dirt and disease; however, where there is a wide range of ability and no additional support, regardless of the best efforts of the teacher, early learners of English make slow progress.
53. The pupils respond very well, eagerly and readily as they gain confidence and feel secure. They collaborate well with each other and they are happy to share their experiences and learning with each other. Some who have been in the school longer than the more recent arrivals help their peers by translating for them. They are confident in their use of bilingual resources made available to them in French, Spanish and Portuguese, but such resources are not available in languages such as Yoruba and Twi to facilitate learning. High quality, culturally relevant aids and other learning resources were seen being used, to help to extend the pupils' learning and to reinforce their self esteem.
54. Pupils take full part in activities and withdrawal is kept to the minimum. They are assessed on entry to school in Year 7 or when they join during the year, and the identification of those needing additional support is made and recorded. In addition, regular assessments are made to ascertain pupils' progress and to identify any areas of particular concern; however, the distinction between pupils with English as an additional language and special educational needs is sometimes unclear.
55. Leadership is satisfactory. There is a good focus on pupils who are at the early stages of learning English; however, there is no joint planning with the subject teachers: an area that needs development. During the inspection, no effective partnership teaching with subject teachers was observed, practice of which could be of benefit both to pupils and teachers in the improvement of the formers' skills in speaking and listening, reading and writing.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	150
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	68

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	5	45	52	44	4	0	0
Percentage	3	30	35	29	3	0	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	900
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	279

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	26
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	110

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	436

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	49
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	77

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.8
National comparative data	8.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
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 3 (Year 9)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2002	117	59

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 5 and above	Boys	61	58	59
	Girls	48	36	34
	Total	109	94	93
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	School	62 (40)	53 (44)	53 (50)
	National	66 (64)	67 (66)	66 (66)
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 6 or above	School	20 (16)	24 (21)	17 (18)
	National	32 (31)	45 (43)	33 (34)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 5 and above	Boys	52	70	64
	Girls	41	46	40
	Total	93	116	104
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	School	53 (49)	66 (56)	59 (47)
	National	67 (65)	71 (68)	67 (64)
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 6 or above	School	23 (21)	30 (24)	24 (18)
	National	32 (31)	44 (42)	34 (33)

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
		2002	93	66

GCSE results		5 or more grades A*-C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	23	73	87
	Girls	24	60	64
	Total	47	133	151
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	30 (36)	84 (81)	95 (94)
	National	51 (48)	89 (91)	95 (96)

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

GCSE results	GCSE points score
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Average points score per pupil	School	32.0 (32.6)
	National	39.0 (39.0)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
91		
50	5	
221	7	
	1	
	1	
13		
	1	
152	13	2
260	18	1
83		
4		
24		
2		

The 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)	55.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.3

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	23
Total aggregate hours worked per week	637

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Financial information

Financial year	2001/02
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	£
Total income	4,108,971
Total expenditure	4,305,507
Expenditure per pupil	4,680

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	68
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	24.3
Key Stage 4	23.4

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Balance brought forward from previous year	449,108
Balance carried forward to next year	252,572

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	30
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	34

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
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)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	900
Number of questionnaires returned	234

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	63	32	3	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	54	42	2	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	49	44	3	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	52	40	4	3	2
The teaching is good.	54	40	2	1	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	52	35	8	3	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	64	30	3	0	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	80	17	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	52	38	6	1	3
The school is well led and managed.	62	35	1	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	56	38	3	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	31	40	11	2	15

Other issues raised by parents

Parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting spoke highly of the improvement to the school since the appointment of the new headteacher.

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

- Results at the end of Key Stage 3 have improved significantly in 2002 tests.
- Good teaching encourages pupils to try hard and achieve well.
- The department is well led and managed.
- The pupils' work is well marked and assessed.
- A good contribution is made to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Areas for improvement

- Standards, including examination results, need to rise.
- The provision for pupils who are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language needs to be improved in lessons.
- No use of ICT was seen in lessons.

56. Results in the national tests taken at the end of Year 9 (Key Stage 3 Standard Assessment Tests) in 2002 were well below the national average but were above the average of similar schools. It was a significant improvement on the 2001 results. Results were similar to mathematics and science. Girls have consistently achieved higher than boys. In the GCSE examinations in 2002, results in both English language and English literature were average; however, the pupils achieved better results than in the average of their other subjects in both 2001 and 2002. This improving trend is the result of good teaching. Both boys and girls are improving in the subject, although boys are further below their national average than are girls.
57. The standards of speaking, listening, reading and writing are well below the national average on entry to the school. In Years 7 to 9, the pupils' writing, where standards of organisation and sentence construction are often weak, is unsatisfactory. The department is aware of this problem and is taking steps to tackle it. A scheme of work linked to the Key Stage 3 National Literacy Strategy is proving useful and gives the pupils more explicit instruction in their basic skills work. Younger pupils often lack fluency when reading aloud, reflecting the large number of pupils who enter the school with a low reading age. Opportunities for pupils to read in class and to understand the meaning of the text enable them to learn well. The more able Year 7 pupils understand how short sentences can be used imaginatively to create suspense when writing. Others are learning to predict what might happen next to the children by reading the poem, *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*. In Year 8, the pupils learn to distinguish between formal and informal letter writing. They understand what is meant by an autobiography by writing about themselves. The standard of work in Year 9 is below average overall, although pupils in the top sets achieve average standards. They show an increasing ability to analyse the text by looking at evidence in *The Landlady* and can describe her character, while the more able understand the similarities and differences between the characters of Billy and Florence in their reading and analysis of *Billy Liar*. They are also developing a sound understanding of moral issues of right and wrong by discussing Billy's lies. When the pupils with low attainment and those with special needs have additional support in class, to help them to read and understand difficult words and phrases, they focus better and contribute well to discussions.
58. The higher ability pupils in Years 10 and 11 are attaining in line with expected standards in all the key skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. They use English effectively in a range of situations and for a variety of objectives and audiences. Their writing is confident and demonstrates appropriate choices of style; they comment thoughtfully on a play or a writer of the twentieth century, and in their narrative writing they can create characters and settings. They sometimes use computers to produce longer pieces of work. More mature writing can be seen; even less able pupils achieve sensitive personal and reflective writing. Most pupils respond well to

literary texts as well as to non-fiction. Their work is usually well presented and readable but this is not consistent throughout the key stage. Many have problems with spelling and grammatical accuracy, particularly pupils of low ability and those with special needs. Those who are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language do not receive specialist support in lessons but those at the later stages generally make satisfactory gains along with others. In lower-attaining groups, there is less purposeful discussion as their listening is immature, reading is below standard and writing is very limited. There is still a high proportion of pupils, and particularly boys, who lose the incentive to do well in their GCSE courses.

59. Throughout the school, listening skills are underdeveloped. Pupils do not always concentrate well on their listening activities and their standards in speaking, although better, are often restricted by a narrow range of vocabulary. In some lessons boys speak more than girls but the language used is more informal and the vocabulary is also less imaginative.
60. Overall, the quality of teaching is good in both key stages; it is sometimes very good. Teachers demonstrate their good subject knowledge and engage pupils well. Objectives are made clear at the beginning of lessons and checks for achievement are made at the end. Marking is good, with advice on how to improve and the teachers ensure that pupils know their levels and agree targets with them. Formal assessments are done and the analysis of results is used well to monitor past performance and for future planning of lessons but this is not consistent in the department. Teachers have good relationships with pupils and generally manage them well. Pupils on the whole show positive attitudes to learning, responding to a valued system of rewards. In lessons where less good teaching was seen, there was usually a slower pace coupled with ineffective class control. There is some specific support given in classes to pupils with special needs. This is mainly focused on individual pupils and is not always available to pupils who have broader learning needs or learn English as an additional language, although the subject teachers do their best to help them. There was also no use of ICT seen in lessons, although some of the homework and assignments showed some use of it by pupils. The subject contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and citizenship by discussing moral issues through the study of texts such as *To Kill a Mocking Bird*.
61. The English department is well led and managed. There is a clear vision and action plan of priorities for the subject. The subject team works well together, is supported very well by senior management and is committed to the continuing improvement of standards. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are regularly undertaken and the newly qualified or appointed teachers are given good support. The library provides a pleasant learning environment and is sometimes used by pupils for homework and for personal study, but the use of the library for study is not planned by all staff for English teaching. The book stock is good and pupils benefit from taking books home for personal study and homework. The National Literacy Strategy has been fully implemented in the school and is incorporated into the schemes of work.
62. The subject has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Results in Key Stage 3 have shown significant improvement; however, results in both key stages remain below national standards.

Drama

63. The provision for drama is good. All pupils passed GCSE in 2002 and the proportion of pupils gaining A*-C grades was close to the national average. A significant feature is that both boys and girls achieved well.
64. The attainment of the pupils currently in Years 10 and 11 is also close to the national average, while the work seen in classes in Years 7 to 9 indicates that standards are below average but improving. Most pupils achieve well, including pupils with special educational needs. In Year 7, pupils learn the skills of working collaboratively in mixed-ability groups and how to focus. They know how to develop characters and create another scene and why it is important to face the audience and make appropriate use of space. Year 8 pupils explore sexism in football through improvisation using still image and mime, but they are easily distracted and find it difficult to take

personal responsibility as independent learners. Year 9 pupils understand basic drama skills but their skills of voice projection, facial expression and body language are underdeveloped. Exploratory strategies such as narration, role-play, flash backs and thought-tracking are developing well in Key Stage 4. For example, pupils in a Year 10 lesson worked well together in their groups in planning their own scenes for presentation about obsession and its effects on different groups of people. One higher-ability and gifted group picked up the issue of anorexia among girls and presented it in an imaginative, empathetic and thought-provoking way.

65. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and join in well. Drama helps their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It raises their self esteem and they gain confidence in evaluating well each other's work. There is a sizeable number of gifted and talented pupils who take great pride in their performance.
66. Teaching is good, particularly in the upper years. Relationships with and support for pupils of different abilities are very good, and consequently pupils are willing to take risks, showing confidence as learners. Organisation and management are also good, showing good use of time, space and people. Teachers use their subject knowledge well to help pupils to extend their learning and to ensure that they understand that drama is not just play but has a deeper power to convey feelings, and express ideas and opinions. Questioning is effective, reinforcing, probing and extending learning. The drama department provides an exciting learning environment for all. Occasional difficulties of behaviour slow the pace of learning for pupils who find it difficult to co-operate, share with others or take personal responsibility.
67. The department is well led, often inspirational and full of ideas. There is a good development plan for the arts faculty and the place of drama in it is secure. The staff work well together and they maintain a good link with English. The curriculum is enhanced by performances, including the Young Vic, and links with local and national drama organisations. Visits to theatres and by theatre groups provide a good extension to formal lessons for many pupils. The use of ICT in drama is as an area for development as is the ability to work both independently and with others. Extra-curricular productions such as *Bugsy Malone* and participation in the Schools' Shakespeare Drama Festival enrich the curriculum. The drama studio, though needing some refurbishment, is a good facility for the development of drama.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Pupils' attitude to mathematics is very good and their behaviour is good.
- Staff have a strong commitment to raising standards.
- The provision of extra-curricular activities is very good.
- The display of pupils' work is very good and it enhances the status of mathematics.

Areas for improvement

- Attainment in Year 9 tests and in GCSE is well below average.
- In lessons, the division of time between starter activities, main themes and plenary session is not always well balanced.
- There is too little use of ICT in mathematics teaching.

68. Pupils' attainment in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 has fallen steadily and was well below the national average in 2002 but above results in similar schools. Results improved in 2002 after very poor results in 2001. Test results were similar to English and science. Boys performed better than girls in 2002 but the difference was less marked than in earlier years. The percentage of pupils achieving GCSE grades A*-C was also well below the national average but improving. The percentage who achieve grades A*-G was above average. Results at GCSE in

2002 were similar to the pupils' results in their other subjects. Although girls achieved better results than boys in 2002 they did less well in 2001.

69. When they enter the school, pupils' standards in mathematics are well below the national average. The quality of teaching, and hence pupils' learning, is now good after a period when it was unsatisfactory. Although pupils' overall achievement in their time in school is satisfactory, they are now making good progress. Overall standards by the end of Year 9 are below the national average. More able pupils have well-developed algebraic skills. They construct and interpret frequency diagrams and calculate upper and lower quartiles in their work on handling data. Middle ability pupils are less proficient in using algebra. They are developing skills in using percentages but are held back by their limited understanding of decimals. In a very well-taught Year 9 booster session, the teacher's enthusiasm and energy raised the pupils' sights considerably so that they began to improve in questions involving percentage increases and decreases. Middle ability pupils also produce scatter diagrams to represent data and are beginning to draw conclusions. Lower ability pupils have weak mental skills and lack confidence in dealing with anything more than rudimentary sequences. They complete questions at a basic level involving the mode and mean of a set of data.
70. By the end of Year 11 pupils' attainment overall is below average; however, they are making good progress to overcome significant gaps in their previous knowledge and understanding. More able pupils achieve particularly well so that they have a good grasp of GCSE subject matter. For example, in a well-paced Year 11 lesson, the pupils gained a very good perception of direct and inverse proportion, enabling them to use algebra effectively in answering questions involving speed with distance and pressure with volume. More able pupils understand and apply Pythagoras' Theorem, utilize trigonometric ratios and appreciate some formal geometric proofs. Middle ability pupils convert numbers to standard form and use and interpret cumulative graphs. They are getting to grips with work in geometry such as determining interior angles of polygons. Lower ability pupils have poor recall of earlier work, as shown by their limited mental skills and shaky but developing understanding of algebra. In a well-taught Year 11 lesson, the teacher's very good rapport with the class and careful progression of examples enabled pupils to begin to use brackets in algebra.
71. Teaching and learning are good in both key stages but particularly in Years 10 and 11. The teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject is good so that pupils steadily acquire appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding to overcome the gaps in their learning. Teachers routinely highlight and discuss key mathematical words and phrases to improve understanding of the work to be tackled. Lessons move at a brisk pace and pupils are given tasks that interest and challenge them, both in class work and in homework. Teachers present material clearly and, in most cases, involve pupils effectively through questions and discussion, leading to high quality learning. On some other occasions, teachers are too dominant and do not engage the pupils sufficiently. Teachers manage pupils well and have positive relationships with them so that pupils' attitudes are very good and their behaviour is good. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress when there is a support assistant in the class to help and encourage them. For example, in a Year 7 class the assistant's effective support enabled two pupils to make suitable contributions to a discussion activity thereby improving both their skills and self esteem. Sometimes support assistants are too static and miss opportunities to help other pupils in the class with special educational needs.
72. The department has made a good start to implementing the Key Stage 3 strategy for mathematics. Teachers have participated in a significant amount of in-service training and there are very good links with the local authority numeracy consultant. The catch-up programme is successfully established in Years 7 and 8, providing extra lessons for lower sets and using specified teaching assistants to support those pupils. Three-part lessons are in place and most teachers begin with a brisk and challenging oral starter activity. Pupils are fully involved in these tasks as they use resources such as personal whiteboards to indicate their answers in unison. In a few other instances the activity takes too long so that pupils begin to lose interest. The quality of plenary sessions varies. In the best lessons, teachers allow sufficient time for the activity, fully engaging pupils in reviewing the work and consolidating what they have learnt. In other cases

teachers either leave too little time or do not involve pupils enough. Numeracy is promoted well by teachers in other subjects.

73. The department is managed effectively and it shares a commitment to raising achievement for all pupils. There has been good progress since the January 2000 report. Pupils' attainment is improving. Teaching and learning have improved, marking of pupils' work is more sustained and effective and the display of pupils' work is vastly improved. The provision of extra-curricular activities is very good, notably the after-school booster classes that have a very positive impact on raising achievement. There remains too little use of ICT in mathematics. The achievement of an appropriate balance of time between exposition by the teacher, pupil activity and a plenary session in lessons is improving, but inconsistent.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- The quality of teaching is good and teachers are committed to improving standards.
- The pupils behave well and have good relationships with each other and with their teachers.
- The department is well managed.
- Many pupils regularly attend extra classes in order to improve their work.

Areas for improvement

- Standards of attainment are still too low.
- Computer equipment is not being used sufficiently in lessons to help pupils to learn.
- Experimental and investigative science is not being taught at a high enough level.
- There are not enough opportunities in lessons for pupils to discuss and explain their work.
- The draft improvement plan for science needs to be finalised and put fully into practice.

74. In the national tests taken at the end of Year 9 (Key Stage 3 SATs) in 2002, pupils achieved results that were well below the national average for all schools and close to the average for similar schools. These results were similar to English and mathematics. The proportion of pupils reaching at least the expected Level 5 has increased steadily over the last four years, at about the same rate as the national increase. There were no significant differences in the results achieved by different groups of pupils. Some pupils with special educational needs achieved results that were unsatisfactory when compared with their results at the end of Key Stage 2. These pupils had been at the school during a time when there had been some major changes in the science teaching staff and they had consequently had considerable disruption to their education. GCSE results in 2002 were below the national average but above average when compared with similar schools. The proportion of pupils achieving grades A*-C in 2002 was below the previous year's figure. The pupils entered for science in 2001 did better on average in this subject than they did in their other subjects; however, this position was reversed in 2002 when the pupils achieved lower results than the average of their other subjects. There were no significant differences in the results achieved by different groups of pupils.

75. The standards achieved in lessons and in the pupils' written work are below average throughout the school; however, the pupils, including those with special educational needs or English as an additional language, achieve the standards that would be expected when compared with their attainment in previous years. This is because there are effective procedures for assessing their progress and helping them to improve. The teachers mark work regularly and give advice on what the pupils need to do to improve. In lessons, the teachers make clear to the pupils what the expected standards are in tests and examinations. For example, pupils in one Year 11 lesson were given very clear guidance on the importance of interpreting graphs and on the standards expected in coursework. Homework is also used to good effect to reinforce the work done in class. This helps to ensure that pupils make progress in their learning. Higher-attaining pupils make good progress and the extra booster lessons are well attended.

76. The pupils in Years 7 to 9 work safely and confidently when conducting simple experiments. They follow instructions carefully and co-operate well with each other. Most of them can explain what they are trying to do, but they are often unsure about what the results tell them and how this relates to their existing knowledge. In a Year 7 lesson, for example, most pupils could effectively make an onion cell slide and examine it under a microscope but fewer could explain how this related to the work they had already done on cells. Science teachers are careful to promote literacy and numeracy. Most pupils cope well with the vocabulary of the subject and there is a good range of styles in their written work. They are able to construct simple tables, graphs and charts, but their ability to interpret the information and to make predictions from it is limited. There is a need to build in more opportunities for pupils to practise these skills, since the standards achieved are still below average by the end of Year 9. The teaching in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory overall, with some good teaching and some unsatisfactory teaching in Year 9. Pupils' behaviour is almost always very good and this helps them to make progress in their learning. In the most successful lessons teachers have clear objectives and use appropriate teaching methods to make the work interesting and relevant. They match the work well to pupils' needs and as a result pupils make good progress in their learning. In some lessons, not enough consideration is given to gaining the pupils' interest by using everyday examples that they understand, or to getting pupils to talk about science and explain their work. The teachers' questioning does not always probe the pupils' understanding or encourage them to think more deeply so that they can apply their knowledge.
77. The pupils in Years 10 and 11 are generally very well behaved in lessons. They work well together, in both practical and theory work. They have good recall of the work that they have covered recently and a good grasp of the relevant scientific vocabulary involved in their work on body systems, reaction rates and sensitivity in plants. They are less sure about work covered some time ago, although a few have a very good grasp of topics studied last year. Because of the topics being covered during the inspection week it was not possible to observe practical work across all three sciences, but the work seen in the pupils' notebooks shows that they are carrying out routine practical work, although this does not reach a very high level. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to engage in investigative work that challenges their thinking and requires them to explain and interpret their work. The quality of teaching in Years 10 and 11 is good overall, with some very good and excellent teaching. In the most successful lessons teachers are careful to build on pupils' existing knowledge and they make good use of assessment data to match the work to pupils' abilities. For example, in a Year 11 lesson the teacher's carefully planned and painstaking approach to teaching the use of catalysts in the industrial preparation of ammonia helped the pupils to make very good progress in their learning. In some lessons, in Key Stage 3 for example, there is not enough thought given to extending the pupils' ability to interpret and explain experimental findings. In both key stages, there is insufficient use of computers to enhance science teaching because the school has a mixture of incompatible hardware systems.
78. Good improvement has been made since the last inspection. Standards have improved although they are still at about the same level when compared with other schools nationally. The department has undergone significant changes in staffing and management recently. It is now well led and the teachers are committed to improving standards. The science technicians share this commitment and give the teachers good support. For example, in one Year 10 lesson on catalysis the science technician gave a good demonstration of a practical technique, helping the class to carry out the experiment effectively. A departmental improvement plan and a plan for implementing the Key Stage 3 strategy have been produced. These both identify relevant priorities and now need to be fully implemented in order to improve further the standards in the subject.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- Very good teaching promotes very good learning.

- The leadership and management of the department is very good.
- Comprehensive assessment procedures inform learning.
- The good relationships between teachers and pupils create an atmosphere that encourages learning.

Areas for improvement

- There needs to be greater access for whole groups to use ICT.
- The proportion of A* and A grades at GCSE should be increased by extending the use of ceramics and developing textile work.

79. In 2002, teachers assessed pupils' standards at the age of 14 as below average for their age and these are confirmed by work seen during the inspection. The proportion of pupils gaining GCSE grades A*-C in 2001 was in line with national averages, continuing the trend of being in line with or above for the last four years. There was a sharp drop in the percentage of pupils gaining A*-C at GCSE in 2002 to well below average, and pupils achieved lower results in art than in the average of their other subjects.
80. The work seen during the inspection in Year 9 reflects the teachers' assessment of the standards in both 2001 and 2002. Pupils are working at a standard below expectation but achieve well over time when their standards upon entry to the school are taken into account. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make similarly good progress to their classmates. Most pupils show increasing control of media. They progress well in their knowledge and understanding about the work of artists and other cultures and how this relates to their own work. Higher-attaining pupils are working well above expectation. They develop work in a Cubist style and use watercolour paints very effectively. Some other high-attaining pupils have a very thoughtful approach to depicting life events and discuss their aims and objectives articulately.
81. By Year 11, pupils are working at a level in line with the national average, and this represents good achievement in relation to their standards of work at the end of Year 9. Higher-attaining pupils show sensitivity in the use of pencil and paint, perception in their annotation of sketchbooks and a variety of research methods and experimentation to relate the works of Hockney, Cezanne and Van Gogh to their drawing and painting of exciting multi-cultural objects arranged in large still life groups.
82. The quality of teaching is very good overall and pupils learn very well as a result. The two excellent lessons seen exemplify strengths such as the skilful use of question and explanation; good planning to make work accessible to all pupils in the group; high quality feedback both verbally and in writing through assessing and marking work; excellent relationships with pupils creating a good learning environment. Pupils in all years are encouraged to use ICT to research and develop ideas. Specialist software is used and the limited facilities are well administered, but are inadequate for use by large numbers or whole groups. Any weaknesses seen in teaching arise when expectations are not high enough. This leads to satisfactory rather than good progress. A comprehensive system of assessment informs the pupils, teachers and parents about pupils' strengths and weaknesses and indicates progress. Teachers use this information to influence what they teach, regularly reviewing schemes of work. Marking in sketchbooks is clear and helps the pupils to improve their work.
83. The generally good attitudes of pupils make a valuable contribution to the quality of learning. They are attentive and value and respect advice given by teachers. Relationships are cordial throughout the area. Where pupils are encouraged to be responsible and are trusted to work independently they rise to these high expectations.
84. The art department makes a valuable contribution to the school environment with exciting displays and excellent examples all around, the highlight being the stunning mosaic, mainly created by pupils in Years 7 to 9, which graces the school chapel. It makes a valuable contribution also to the cultural development of pupils through the study of western and non-western artists and craftspeople and the observation of the world in which we live. The department is very well led and

managed and it has moved forward considerably in recent years. Steps have been taken to implement recommendations made, for example a handbook for pupils is in use in Years 10 and 11 with one planned for Years 7 to 9. The pottery has been upgraded and will shortly be back in use. Staffing problems in the last academic year adversely affected exam results but the current stable situation makes it likely that previous levels of attainment will be restored. Extending the use of ceramics and developing textile work, in addition to the photographic work already done should be made more manageable by the provision of ancillary help and should lead to an increase in the proportion of A* and A grades achieved.

CITIZENSHIP

Overall, the quality of provision in citizenship is **very good**.

Strengths

- Excellent leadership has helped to ensure the successful introduction of the subject.
- The curriculum is thoroughly planned and very well managed.
- Teaching is consistently good and the teachers are committed to the subject.
- There are good resources for teaching the subject and outside agencies are used well.

Areas for improvement

- The school does not currently offer external accreditation in the subject.
- There is a need to monitor the teaching of citizenship through other subjects.

85. There is no national data for attainment in citizenship so it is not possible to compare this school's results with the national average; however, the school introduced its citizenship course a year earlier than was required by law and the pupils have made very good progress in their learning. Standards are above average overall as a result of effective planning, good teaching and the very positive attitudes towards the subject shown by staff and pupils. The pupils in all year groups have citizenship lessons, supplemented by learning about citizenship in other subjects. They achieve good standards by Year 9 and Year 11. Almost all pupils contribute well in lessons and there are no significant differences in the progress made by different groups, including pupils with special educational needs.
86. Pupils of all ages take part willingly in class discussions on a variety of topics, including marriage breakdown, personal safety, illegal drugs and family relationships. They communicate their ideas well and show a good understanding of the issues involved and of the consequences of different courses of action. For example, in a Year 9 lesson the pupils considered the reasons for domestic violence and showed sensitivity in understanding the causes and the feelings of those involved. They recognised the destructive effects of violence on family life and made thoughtful suggestions as to how individuals could deal with violence. In another lesson, Year 11 pupils considered the changing nature of family relationships and the role of the extended family. They listened well to each other's views and respected the contributions of others. Written work is well presented and the pupils have good records of the topics that they have covered. Homework is regularly set and this helps to ensure that pupils make good progress. Year 9 pupils speak very positively of the school council and have an appreciation of the way in which democratic representation works.
87. There is a well-planned scheme of work for the subject and each teacher has a complete set of resources to support their teaching. The teachers take the subject seriously and make it clear to the pupils that they expect high standards of attainment and participation in lessons. They present the topics in interesting ways and encourage all pupils to contribute fully to class discussions and group work. The lessons have clear learning objectives and this helps the pupils to learn effectively. Good classroom management and the very good behaviour of the pupils also have a very positive effect on the standards attained. External speakers and outside agencies, such as the police and the Connexions service, make good contributions to the pupils' learning. In a small minority of lessons, a few pupils find it difficult to negotiate roles and delegate responsibilities when undertaking group work because these difficulties have not been anticipated in teachers' planning. Opportunities to deal with citizenship themes are identified in the schemes of work for other subjects but some teachers are not clear as to what is required. There is a need to monitor more closely the quality of teaching of citizenship in other subjects.
88. The co-ordinator has worked successfully to introduce this new subject. Her leadership and energy have ensured that the course is coherent and well resourced. The materials and schemes of work give good support to non-specialist teachers and this has a positive influence on standards. Good links with outside agencies have been developed and these are used to provide variety and relevance in the curriculum. The subject makes a very good contribution to the pupils'

literacy by providing interesting and relevant contexts within which they can develop their speaking and writing skills.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- The majority of pupils, in Years 7 to 11 make good progress and achieve well.
- Teaching and learning is of very good quality.
- Provision for literacy and numeracy is good.
- The high quality of leadership and management has brought about much improvement in the recent past.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs and those identified with English as an additional language is good.
- There are excellent enrichment opportunities available to pupils.

Areas for improvement

- Standards at the higher levels in GCSE examinations could be raised.
- The control element of ICT needs to be reinstated.
- Computer-aided design and computer-aided manufacture needs development.
- Food technology needs to be reinstated.

89. Most pupils enter the school with little experience of this subject in their primary years and as a result have below average knowledge, understanding and skill in designing, making and evaluating. The exceptions are pupils from homes where craft skills are valued and children are encouraged to use tools. There is no baseline assessment for this subject, but observation of Year 7 pupils during the inspection confirms pupils' below average skills. Results at GCSE in 2002 were well below average, but the pupils achieved similar results to the average of their other subjects. Girls achieved considerably better than boys.

90. The majority of pupils in Years 7 to 11 achieve well as a result of their contact with a strong team of teachers who between them have complementary subject knowledge and skills in graphics, ICT and resistant materials. Teaching is very good; standards are improving rapidly and are above average. These teachers are enthusiasts who are able to communicate the importance of effort and commitment in achieving quality products, whether the aim is to design new shop fronts, cut joints accurately or disassemble shoes in order to understand construction. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils are very good. Year 7 pupils are the exception. Occasionally some are too noisy or inclined to think of themselves rather than others. The average and above average standards observed during the inspection in lessons and pupils' folders confirm teachers' assessments. The department is embarking on a major refurbishment. This is a concern where the pupils use the electric drill. At present, because of the refurbishment, there are no safety lines marked on the floor in front of the machine, and even though they are told not to do so, pupils move too near when the drill is being used. Resources are currently limited but staff and pupils are making the most of what is available. New computer and software provision is already starting to make a difference to the way pupils use ICT for designing, research and recording photographic images. Very good resources for control and computer-aided design and computer-aided manufacture are about to be installed.

91. The inability to recruit suitable staff for food technology has led to the temporary loss of this experience from the curriculum. As part of the Excellence in Cities provision, however, gifted and talented pupils are able to attend food lessons after school. The vegetable soup prepared, cooked and consumed by these pupils on a cold November evening not only added to their understanding of food preparation and cooking but also proved a valuable social occasion as adults and pupils shared a meal.

92. Teachers have all had literacy and numeracy training and this is firmly embedded in their planning. It makes a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. The final parts of lessons are used well to help the pupils to reflect on what they have learned as well as to give the teacher a clearer view of the pupils' own perceptions. Good skill development in one Year 7 class was helped by the teacher's multi-sensory approach to teaching about the use of a coping saw. All pupils could hear when the saw was cutting correctly and when it was not as a result of listening, with eyes closed, to a demonstration conducted by the teacher. Later in the lesson the large model of a saw blade gave clues so that the pupils remembered the cutting direction. This same teacher has developed good strategies to help a severely sight-impaired student to take part in a project based on designing and making plastic cutlery. Excellent learning was evident in a Year 8 class as a group of Spanish and Portuguese speakers collaborated, without help from the teacher, to translate the key words identified for the lesson on the white board. Good self esteem was evident because these pupils, who often could only give brief responses to questions, recognised that they had contributed well to the lesson.
93. Several Latin American and Albanian Year 9 pupils have a tradition of making artefacts at home and this leads to above average skill development in wood construction. All pupils know how well they are achieving because of the sharing of learning objectives at the start of all lessons as well as their personal targets against National Curriculum levels or GCSE grades. Many Year 10 pupils have above average drawing skills and can design logos and construct and use nets for packaging. Speaking is less well developed. Even when the teacher led a class discussion and then encouraged group discussion, many boys copied what the teacher had written on the board rather than discussing the topic under consideration. Generally girls are more vocal in question and answer sessions than boys. An exception is the case of a Year 8 boy, with special educational needs, who remained silent throughout the lesson but after the practical session made a good contribution in the closing stages.
94. Teaching is very good in Years 10 and 11. As a result, pupils make good progress and achieve above average standards. Higher-attainers in Year 11 achieve very well, as evidenced by their design ideas for a jewellery box and their thinking about modification, to show the examiner their understanding of the differences between craft techniques and mass production. The needs of the gifted and talented are very well considered in terms of GCSE provision, but currently there is no fast track in the subject for those who are already operating in advance of this stage of development. The benefits of the good vocational provision at Lambeth College showed clearly as a boy with special educational needs used the skills he had learned on the construction course to cut efficiently and fit his wood joint ahead of many of his peers, producing a quality fit. Lower-attaining boys often decorate their coursework with inappropriate borders. These detract from the purpose of the exercise and do not add quality to their work.
95. The department has come through a period where staff problems have dominated and had a detrimental effect on standards. Visionary leadership throughout the period has ensured that pupils have had very good enrichment experiences, such as the sculpture project with post-graduate pupils from Goldsmith's College and work with the Design Council. Recently good progress has been made in raising standards, improving teaching and learning and ensuring that ICT facilities are adequate for needs; however, statutory requirements are not met in regard to control technology.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- Good teaching and interesting resources ensure that pupils work to the best of their ability.
- Pupils are very well managed.
- Pupils' very good attitudes and good behaviour lead to a positive atmosphere for learning.
- Good leadership and management are instrumental in the good improvement in the subject.

Areas for improvement

- Attainment at Year 9 is below national expectations.
- GCSE results are well below average.
- Fieldwork for all year groups should be introduced.
- Differences in attainment between girls and boys need to be addressed.

96. GCSE results for 2002 were well below average, particularly in the A* to C grades, with girls' results better than boys'. The picture has been similar in previous years; in 2001 and 2002 the pupils entered for geography did significantly worse in this subject than in the average of all other subjects, and over the past three years there has been a decline in results. This decline can be attributed to staffing difficulties and poor attendance, both of which interfered with the continuity of teaching. Current work shows improvement as plans recently put into place by the new head of department to raise standards begin to take effect. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall in all year groups, with no unsatisfactory lessons. The good pace and planning and interesting resources ensure that the pupils work to the best of their abilities. Pupils listen well, both to their teachers and to each other, and they obviously enjoy their lessons. The majority work with enthusiasm.
97. Attainment by the end of Year 9 is below national expectations. Girls work at a consistently higher level than boys. Because of consistently well-planned and lively teaching, pupils make good progress during Years 7 to 9 from a very low base of skills and knowledge on entry to the school. Their long-term achievement is good. Most have learned to read maps, including Ordnance Survey maps, and to observe and compare natural and human features in the environment. They understand the concept of sustainable development and why this is important to developing countries. In the better lessons, such as the Year 9 lessons focusing on contrasts in Brazil, pupils were constantly asked to contribute their own ideas which generated confidence and positive self-expression. In weaker lessons, the teachers talked too much and did not give pupils enough opportunity to ask their own questions and think for themselves. Although pupils learn well overall, most of this learning is at present only theoretical as they have no outside investigation work. Therefore they are not being given the opportunity to develop the full range of geographical skills. Although appropriate standard of work is provided for most pupils in each class, the higher-attainers are not given enough challenge, such as researching statistics in order to assess levels of economic development in different countries instead of copying them out of a textbook.
98. Achievement is satisfactory in Years 10 and 11, but standards are still below expectations by the end of Year 11. Higher-attaining pupils have produced good pieces of coursework based on considering whether a local ice rink should be turned into a new supermarket. The majority have learned to analyse and draw conclusions from data and are developing competent essay writing skills because of the constant emphasis in lessons on reading and writing. Lower-attaining pupils are still struggling to draw accurate maps and diagrams and to express ideas clearly. They are getting some practical experience of observing and drawing conclusions through imaginative teaching strategies, such as lumps of turf brought to the classroom to demonstrate the importance of vegetation in preventing soil erosion.
99. All pupils make good progress in literacy because every lesson emphasises key words and precise vocabulary definitions, and there are often opportunities for reading aloud and for writing information. These teaching methods also help the many pupils with English as an additional language to make good progress. Numeracy is taught through graphs and mapwork, but is not as well emphasised as literacy. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory in all year groups because they are known to teachers who give them suitable work and additional help, and liaise well with support assistants where these are present; however, many teachers have a high proportion of pupils with special needs in their classes with no extra support and this slows the progress of these pupils. Subject targets in individual education plans are at present very general and do not give these pupils short-term targets.

100. Good leadership and management under recently appointed heads of faculty and department have begun to bring about good improvement in the subject, with the aim of raising standards. This includes new schemes of work for Years 7 to 9 with associated assessment procedures, and a change of GCSE examination syllabus with strong strategies to support revision. Opportunities for teaching citizenship appear in the new programmes of work but not provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which means this aspect is not well developed. Although ICT use is built into programmes of work, this is not happening at present because the department is awaiting the installation of its own computers, which are already on site. A stable team of committed and enthusiastic teachers ensures a good capacity for further improvement.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- The very good quality of teaching leads to very good learning.
- Pupils are very well managed so that they listen and learn very well.
- Pupils' very good attitudes and good behaviour result in a very good classroom atmosphere.
- Leadership and management is providing a good focus for improving teaching and standards.

Areas for improvement

- Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 9 is below national expectations.
- GCSE results are well below average.
- There is no explicit provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- There need to be more outside study and enrichment visits.
- Differences in attainment between girls and boys needs to be addressed.

101. GCSE results for 2002 were well below average, particularly in the higher A* to C grades, and girls' results were better than boys'. In 2001 and 2002 the pupils entered for history did significantly worse in this subject than in the average of all other subjects. There has been no overall improvement during the last three years, although the 2002 results are an improvement on those of 2001, which suffered a sharp fall because of staffing difficulties and a high level of absence. There has been a considerable improvement in the quality of teaching and learning, which are now very good overall in all year groups, with no unsatisfactory lessons. Very good planning, a brisk pace and high expectations invariably lead to interesting and stimulating lessons. Pupils behave well and work hard, creating a good atmosphere for learning.
102. Attainment by the end of Year 9 is below national expectations. Girls work at a consistently higher level than boys and in 2002 their attainment was in line with national expectations; however, pupils make good progress during Years 7 to 9 from a very low base of historical skills and knowledge when they enter the school, so that their long-term achievement is good. By the end of Year 9 they have gained a sound background of historical knowledge about the Roman Empire and the religious conflicts of the Tudor monarchy, because of knowledgeable and enthusiastic teaching and very good management of lessons which ensure that all pupils listen and learn continually. They can select and combine historical information from several sources, as in the Year 9 lessons when they were evaluating the living conditions of factory workers in the nineteenth century. Their reading and comprehension are good because their teachers miss no opportunity to teach them key vocabulary and give them every chance to read aloud and to discuss their opinions.
103. Achievement is still good by the end of Year 11, with current pupils working to a higher standard than groups in previous years and reaching an average standard overall. The best pupils have developed good essay writing skills and have produced a good standard of coursework. The lower-attaining pupils are developing their competence and confidence, but their coursework is limited. Year 11 pupils understand well the causes and results of the Munich Putsch and how Hitler gained the confidence of the German people during the years leading up to World War 2. Year 10 pupils have made a good start on their new course and are learning well about the world economic crisis of the 1930's because of the lively and well-planned teaching which holds their interest throughout.
104. Because there is good provision of different kinds of work for different groups of pupils, everyone can make progress at their own rate, including pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, who are helped by the emphasis on key vocabulary in all lessons. Pupils who are in the early stages of learning English make satisfactory progress with the support of classroom assistants and their teachers. Those pupils whose English is more advanced learn well, in line with their classmates. Higher-attaining pupils are stimulated by special activities, such as lessons about classical civilisations, which aim to deepen their historical understanding.

105. Use of ICT is planned into all schemes of work but is not at present seen in action because the department is awaiting the installation of its computers. Although citizenship has been built into the curriculum there is no explicit provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development which means that these aspects are not emphasised in the teaching and learning. Because of difficulties in the past year there have not been enough study and enrichment visits in the local area, although there are plans to reinstate these as soon as possible. This limits the depth to which some aspects can be taught and the pupils' understanding of historical events. Good assessment procedures are in place and the progress of all pupils can be individually tracked; however, there is not yet enough analysis of the progress of different groups in order to find out whether any particular groups are under-achieving.
106. Past difficulties with staffing have now been overcome, and good leadership and management ensure that a stable and enthusiastic team is committed to continuing the already good improvement in the subject. New schemes of work are being written for Years 7 to 9, and a new GCSE syllabus has been introduced, along with strategies to improve results through increased revision support and early action in cases where pupils are underachieving.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- All pupils now follow an ICT skills course in Years 7 to 9 and an accredited ICT course in Years 10 and 11.
- An increased number of computers is now available for both pupil and staff use.

Areas for improvement

- Standards of attainment in all years and the numbers completing examination course requirements in Year 11 need to be raised.
- Opportunities for pupils in all years to use ICT to measure, record, respond to, control and automate events should be provided.
- Opportunities for pupils to use their ICT skills in their subjects are limited.

107. Attainment at GCSE in 2002 was significantly below the national average and below the school average for A*-C grades and A*-G; however, the results were a significant improvement over the previous year when results were very poor. There was a good increase in the number of girls achieving A*-C grades from a very low number the previous year. A high proportion of candidates continued to receive unclassified results, although this number fell from the previous year.
108. Provision for ICT is unsatisfactory, but it is beginning to improve significantly since the introduction of more resources and ICT lessons in all years. In spite of this, attainment is below expectations by Year 9, although pupils usually make at least satisfactory and sometimes good progress in relation to their ability and past performance. Teaching in Years 7 to 9 is at least satisfactory and often good. In a Year 7 class, it became apparent that many pupils did not have an appropriate grasp of some basic ICT knowledge and vocabulary. This required the teacher to undertake some remedial work, after which pupils worked with more confidence. There is evidence that much-improved resources, together with a new scheme of work based upon the Key Stage 3 strategy for ICT are beginning to have a beneficial effect upon standards. Pupils in a Year 8 class were beginning to use some more advanced spreadsheet functions in order to plot and analyse rainfall statistics.
109. In Years 10 and 11 teaching is good overall. There is a wide range of attainment in Years 10 and 11 between different groups in each year, although pupils are mostly making good progress. In the higher-attaining groups much work is consistent with expectations and some work is of a good standard. In one lesson pupils were using more advanced software functions to good effect in analysing data from an electrical business. In a lower-attaining class in Year 11, pupils' recall of

previous work on data storage was weak; however, attainment overall in Years 10 and 11 is consistent with expectations. Pupils with special needs and those with English as an additional language frequently have difficulty with aspects of literacy, but are usually well supported in class, enabling them to make appropriate progress. Learning is usually good and the standard of coursework produced by pupils in Year 11 taking GNVQ Part 1 at intermediate level has shown improvement during the year. Improved monitoring procedures are being put in place to reduce the number of candidates who do not complete the course successfully.

110. Successful lessons are based upon thorough planning, good management of pupils and tasks structured in such a way as to provide good challenge for all. Pupils' attitudes are mostly very positive in ICT lessons. They are willing to contribute to question and answer sessions and the majority can work effectively without being distracted. The ability to adapt strategies to suit different responses from groups of pupils is much in evidence. Good use is made of presentational software and projection facilities in ICT rooms to involve pupils in discussion about topics which are being introduced. The setting of appropriate homework is a regular feature and pupils are encouraged to use ICT rooms after school to complete work. In a minority of lessons the usual good pace is not maintained throughout. Where this happens it is more likely to be boys who are not working appropriately. Pupils can co-operate in small groups when required, and effective peer support was frequently seen.
111. The ICT department has seen some significant changes in resources, accommodation and staffing in recent years. There has been some difficulty in recruiting ICT specialists, and during the inspection two out of three ICT teachers were temporary. The number of computers is now ahead of the national average and the new ICT rooms have good projection facilities. The learning resource centre is well equipped with computers and there are clusters of machines in other areas in the school. These changes have enabled some very positive developments to take place in the ICT curriculum. All pupils now have timetabled ICT lessons in which to develop their ICT skills and all follow an accredited course in Years 10 and 11. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. The school has made significant strides in the last two years in providing the structure which is now enabling ICT standards to move ahead. Standards are improving in taught ICT courses, although the ICT department needs to ensure that its procedures for monitoring pupils' work in examination classes are diligently applied in order to improve completion rates.
112. Many teachers in other departments have recently undertaken ICT training but opportunities for pupils to use their ICT skills in other subjects are limited. The use of ICT to enhance teaching and learning in the subjects of the curriculum should be improved. In particular the use of ICT to measure, record, respond to, control and automate events needs to develop in appropriate subjects to ensure that all pupils have opportunities to experience all aspects of the ICT curriculum.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

Strengths

- Leadership is very good, providing clear direction for the department's work.
- The range of extra-curricular activities is good.
- There is some very good teaching characterised by carefully planned, structured activities, with good resources and high expectations of pupils.
- Good attitudes have been developed among pupils.

Areas for improvement

- The level of attainment in public examinations needs to be raised.
- The good teaching practice which exists within the department should be shared.
- The target language needs to be used consistently for classroom communication.

113. Pupils entered for GCSE French and German in 2001 achieved worse results in these subjects than they did in the average of all their other subjects. Pupils entered for Spanish, however, achieved better results than in the average of all their other subjects as they also did in 2002. In all three languages, the proportion of pupils who gained grade C or better was below the national figure and in French and German it was well below. Pupils taking Spanish made better progress in 2001 than those taking French and German. Results for 2002 show an improving trend, except among girls in Spanish. The proportion of pupils who gained grade C or better improved overall in French and German and the results of boys also improved in Spanish.
114. In work seen during the inspection, pupils of all levels of ability in Years 7 to 9 maintained good progress and responded particularly well when challenged with creative and imaginative tasks, although attainment is below expectations by Year 9. For example, the pupils in a Year 8 French class made a special effort when asked to create a radio advertisement and pupils in a Year 9 French class enjoyed using different styles to recite a dialogue. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make very good progress in modern language lessons, largely because their teachers encourage them to transfer the skills that they have developed as bilingual learners. The attitudes of all the pupils are influenced positively by their presence. For example in a Year 7 Spanish class, a Spanish speaker was able to ask questions and a Portuguese speaker was easily able to keep up and contribute the other half of the dialogue. Teachers encourage positive attitudes by providing a bright, welcoming environment with key words posted around the walls of the classroom.
115. Most pupils in Years 10 and 11 make satisfactory progress over the two years, but standards are below average by Year 11. More able pupils are encouraged to express their own ideas and to develop the ability to use language independently. For example, pupils in a Year 11 French class became particularly animated when they realised they could describe in simple French their opinions about films they had seen. With appropriate encouragement, bilingual pupils make good progress, but this does not always happen. One French-speaking pupil was in the habit of talking to his French teacher in English, missing an opportunity to improve. Few pupils are able to produce fluent prose with a satisfactory degree of accuracy at this level.
116. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to study outside lesson time in clubs and booster classes. Some trips are undertaken and teachers offer time outside lessons to help pupils who find homework difficult. The cultural dimension is strongly supported by the department through extra-curricular activities, such as South American dance and nurturing bilingualism. The support provided for pupils with special educational needs is good, but few support assistants are available within the department. Pupils do not yet have the opportunity to use ICT facilities.
117. Teaching is good overall, with more of the good and very good teaching observed in the lower years. Teachers establish very good relationships with pupils, setting homework and marking their written work in a positive and helpful manner. High expectations of behaviour are met and the teachers use a variety of learning styles, using clear, well-made resources. For example, in a Year 9 Spanish class, pupils marched on the spot to the words for left and right and in a Year 8 German class, pupils discussed in pairs the order for writing a letter in German. In doing so, they moved the component parts around on their desks, trying different combinations.
118. One shortcoming is that not all teachers use the language they are teaching for the purposes of communicating with pupils during lessons, and teaching methods do not always give pupils the chance to practise the language they are learning. Instead, some teachers move too quickly from the presentation of new language forms to the expectation that pupils will be able to reproduce them. In some lessons, the pupils are not given sufficient opportunity to practise speaking to each other in pairs or small groups and there is too much focus on activities conducted centrally by the teacher. Whilst literacy skills are integrated into most lessons and pupils are familiar with grammatical terms such as plural, vowel and the gender of nouns, they sometimes rely on guesswork when asked to analyse the grammar of a group of words.
119. The leadership and management of the department are very good. The new head of department conducted an audit, providing appropriate and clear priorities, which have the support of all the

language teachers. The decision to place ICT lower in the priority order was harsh, but appropriate, in view of the department's present needs. Action has been taken to improve teaching, including marking, assessment and homework, and the department's practices are becoming more consistently effective. Workshops have been held to share good teaching practice and the department has analysed recent GCSE results in order to provide data for identifying successful teaching and learning strategies. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- Pupils achieve well.
- Music is well taught.
- The quality of learning is good.
- Pupils enjoy lessons.

Areas for improvement

- Schemes of work are at an early stage and lack clear links to assessment.
- One room is too small and has insufficient resources for larger teaching groups.
- Requirements to use ICT in Years 7 to 9 are not met.

120. GCSE results were above average in 2001. Group sizes are small but are growing and trends fluctuate. Music is well taught and the pupils achieve well. The department is inclusive in its work so that pupils with special educational needs and talents, as well as those who speak English as a second language, achieve similar results. Lessons are well planned and discipline is good. A high priority is given to teaching literacy and numeracy through the subject. Good use is made of homework. The quality of instrumental teaching is good. As a result, the standard of learning is good. Pupils can demonstrate what they have learned and make concentrated intellectual and creative efforts. The attitudes of pupils of all ages are very good. They show high levels of interest in their work and relationships are good. There is a strong culture of shared values and mutual respect in the classroom.

121. Teaching is good in Years 7 to 9 and the pupils make good progress, although attainment is below national expectations. Most pupils can name notes accurately but they struggle to perform chords on the keyboard. There was very well-paced and structured teaching for Year 7 pupils who were learning about Gamelan. The pupils were tested on the literal and musical meaning of words. Challenging listening and performing tasks followed. As a result, learning was impressive as the pupils gained confidence and skill in understanding words and playing rhythms. Year 8 pupils received good teaching in a lesson on note recognition. Pupils were well managed and every step in the lesson was carefully monitored. Questioning was detailed and pupils were continually encouraged. They were able to make good progress and to maintain high levels of focus but it was difficult for them to move around the room to reach resources. In a Year 9 lesson on chords, the pupils were well managed and the level of challenge was appropriate. Good use was made of revision and of homework to support learning. As a result, pupils made sustained efforts to analyse chords and could explain how to find notes.

122. GCSE teaching is consistently good. Pupils achieve well and standards are average. A strength is in composing, using ICT and improvising riffs, but pupils have more difficulty in talking about music using technical language. In a Year 10 lesson on semitones, the clear descriptions and expectations of the teacher meant that pupils maintained high levels of independence and concentration in their keyboard work. They were supported by skilled tutorial teaching. Good use was made of differentiated tasks and evaluation. Year 11 pupils made very good progress in improvising as a result of a good range of teaching methods in a lesson on musical devices. Explanations were very clear, and as a result pupils could explain and demonstrate what imitation and repetition meant.

123. The subject co-ordinator has been recently appointed and the early indications are that previous weaknesses have been correctly identified and appropriate action taken to tackle them. There is good provision for cultural education through the choir, recorder group, school production and instrumental lessons, which are provided free by the school. There is insufficient teaching equipment and space for larger groups in one teaching room. Requirements to teach music through ICT are not met. Since the last inspection there have been improvements in accommodation, resources, the attitudes of pupils and the numbers of pupils taking GCSE.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- The quality of teaching is good; teachers set high expectations of pupils in terms of participation and behaviour. As a result, learning and progress are good in lessons.
- The attitude of pupils in lessons towards physical education is positive and lively.
- Newly established and effective strategies raise the attainment of pupils studying GCSE.
- A very good range of extra-curricular activities are attended by many pupils of all abilities.

Areas for improvement

- A full complement of permanent, full-time subject staff needs to be employed.
- There is inadequate teaching time for Year 11 pupils and for the teaching of games.
- A departmental development plan and a comprehensive review of the physical education curriculum needs to be established.
- Measures should be taken to reduce the small but significant minority of pupils who do not participate in lessons.

124. GCSE results are consistently below the national average; however, relevant strategies have been put in place to raise performance. These include widening extra-curricular activities to provide more practical experience for pupils, a mock practical with an external moderator and the employment of external coaches. Teachers are also making very good use of ongoing assessment to monitor the progress of pupils as in a Year 10 rounders lesson where pupils were assessed for batting and fielding.

125. Teaching and learning are good and a strength of the department, although the use of supply staff to fill temporary vacancies is an unsatisfactory situation where pupils require consistency of approach and expectations. Nonetheless, all teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic and teach lessons which are well structured, use a variety of activities and are conducted at a lively pace. The majority of pupils in Years 7 to 9 are attaining at the level expected nationally. They are able to copy simple skills with control and co-ordination and are beginning to understand how to improve their own performance. The majority of pupils in Years 10 and 11 are also performing at a level expected at this stage. Most perform with enthusiasm, many with precision, and they work hard at improving their performance; some talented boys consistently use advanced sports skills in lessons. In all year groups there is a wide spectrum of attainment, but teachers accommodate this through individual support and encouragement, and as a consequence, all pupils achieve well in lessons. Teachers set high expectations of pupils in terms of participation, behaviour and clothing and as a result, pupils learn well in lessons. They provide an environment in lessons in which all pupils, regardless of ability, gender or background, feel valued for both effort and achievement. Pupils have a lively, positive approach to physical education and the majority make clear progress in lessons by listening carefully to the teacher and practising conscientiously as individuals and in groups; however, teachers have to work hard to keep some pupils from disrupting lessons, and there is a small but significant number of pupils who do not participate regularly. Further improvements to lesson planning can be made by having clear, measurable and explicit lesson outcomes linked to simple, clearly defined teaching points which are reinforced throughout

all lesson activities. Some lessons are not as successful as they might be where understanding of key points is not checked by teachers.

126. In a very good Year 8 dance lesson, lively pupils were managed effectively by the teacher and worked co-operatively to produce group balances. The teachers successfully integrate pupils with special educational needs into activities, including a visually impaired pupil. The use of individual support and guidance, and ensuring that all pupils are included in lesson activities are major strengths of the department. The teacher made good use of a very talented pupil in a Year 10 dance lesson to lead and demonstrate routines. In a good Year 7 girls' football lesson, the teacher gave very clear explanations about the correct techniques and set up interesting and progressively more difficult practices. As a consequence, most were able to dribble with control. In a good Year 9 hockey lesson, pupils were taught the basics of striking, dribbling and controlling the ball using a variety of methods and were able to work collaboratively in small groups to perfect their skills. In a good Year 11 badminton lesson, the pupils were encouraged to evaluate each other's performance and as a consequence made good progress. In a Year 7 basketball lesson, the teacher's and pupils' demonstrations and the competitive practices based on them, improved the pupils' performance and, as a consequence, the majority of the class was able to execute a set shot with consistency.
127. The department has made good progress since the last inspection as a result of the commitment, leadership and high expectations of the head of department. The many extra-curricular activities, clubs and school teams provide additional opportunities for pupils to enjoy sport and improve their skills; however, there is currently inadequate curriculum time for Year 11 pupils and for the effective teaching of games. Assessment procedures are used to record pupils' performance and these enable teachers to monitor and evaluate the progress of pupils. These procedures could now be expanded to include the assessment of Year 7 pupils on entry to the school. Further progress can be made by the drawing up and implementation of a departmental development plan based on specific, measurable targets, for example in the reduction of non-participants. There is also a need for the department to undertake a comprehensive review of the physical education curriculum including a consideration of which sports are offered.