

INSPECTION REPORT

ORLEANS PARK SCHOOL

Twickenham

LEA area: Richmond-upon-Thames

Unique reference number: 102923

Headteacher: Mr David Talbot

Reporting inspector: Mr Martin Beale
19385

Dates of inspection: 13 - 16 January 2003

Inspection number: 249101

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 11-16

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Richmond Road
Twickenham
Middlesex

Postcode: TW1 3BB

Telephone number: 020 8891 0187

Fax number: 020 8744 0312

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr L N Mann

Date of previous inspection: 10th February 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
19385	Martin Beale	Registered inspector		What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
1166	Rosemary Hussain	Lay inspector		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?
19278	Robert Allan	Team inspector	Mathematics	
27188	Gill Murray	Team inspector	English	
15079	Tony Boys	Team inspector	Science	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
18261	Tony Hill	Team inspector	Art	
8501	Paul Hartwright	Team inspector	Design and technology	
23324	Sylvia Greenland	Team inspector	Geography; history	
8052	Ken McKenzie	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
12408	Alan Frith	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
23308	John Morrell	Team inspector	Music	
25748	Roger Moyle	Team inspector	Physical education	
30563	Jackie Pentlow	Team inspector	Religious education; citizenship	
23268	Kevin Corrigan	Team inspector	Special educational needs	How well are pupils taught?

The inspection contractor was:

Brookbridge Education
2 Haselwood Drive
Enfield
MIDDX EN2 7BU

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Alexandra House
33 Kingsway

London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is a popular and over-subscribed mixed comprehensive for pupils aged 11 to 16. There are significantly more boys than girls amongst the 1021 pupils. About one-fifth are from minority ethnic backgrounds but with no one major group. There is an above average proportion of pupils for whom English is not their mother tongue, but only one pupil is at an early stage of learning English. No single community language predominates. The proportion of pupils entitled to a free school meal and the number of pupils identified with special educational needs are both average, although double the national average have statements. The main reasons for higher levels of need are specific learning, emotional and behavioural and speech or communication difficulties. Attainment on entry varies, but is above average in most year groups.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school with many very strong features, of which all associated with it can feel justifiably proud. Standards at GCSE are above average and have been improving rapidly under the firm and astute leadership of the headteacher who is supported well by effective governors and a strong team of staff. Teaching is good, with the pupils developing new skills, knowledge and understanding rapidly in many lessons. Staff are particularly successful at both meeting the pupils' diverse needs and enabling them to make good progress. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils make good progress and overall standards are above average by Year 11 and well above average in English and mathematics.
- In the substantial number of lessons where teaching is of a high quality the pupils work hard and with much interest.
- Strong leadership and very effective management are contributing significantly to the school's aim of raising standards.
- The curriculum has been designed carefully so that pupils are able to follow a wide range of courses in Years 10 and 11.
- Pupils with special educational needs are catered for very well.
- Staff support and guide the pupils well towards their academic and personal targets.
- The wide range of extra-curricular activities, particularly in sport for which the school has a high reputation, broadens and enriches the pupils' experiences.
- The partnership with parents has a considerable bearing on the work of the school and the standards achieved by the pupils.

What could be improved

- The improvements in computer facilities have not managed to keep up with demand and have affected the school's ability to fulfil all National Curriculum requirements, particularly in Years 10 and 11.
- In a small number of lessons teachers do not engage and interest the pupils sufficiently and then do not deal constructively with any subsequent interruption to learning.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school went through a difficult period immediately following the last inspection in 1997; however, there has been substantial improvement since the appointment of a new headteacher just over three years ago. GCSE results have risen considerably, attendance has improved and there is a greater proportion of high quality teaching. The main weaknesses identified in the last inspection report have been dealt with successfully. Aspects of leadership and management previously deemed to have shortcomings are now a strength of the school, placing it in a very 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	C	B	A	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E

The rising trend in the school's Year 9 test results (Key Stage 3 Standard Assessment Tests) has been at a slower rate than national improvements, largely because results fell in 2002. This fall was particularly sharp in English, from well above to below average. Results in mathematics and science were similar to the national average. This year group had been identified by staff as having weaker attitudes to learning than others. Staff have reflected on the rigour of their teaching and have taken action to remedy these shortcomings. Pupils are now making good progress in English and mathematics and standards by Year 9 are above average. There has been less success in science although progress is satisfactory and standards are average.

GCSE results have been improving more rapidly than nationally for the last five years. Results improved considerably in 2002 and exceeded the school's targets, which have been raised further for 2003. Results in English language, mathematics and science were all well above average with good results also in art, drama, English literature, French, German and history. The proportion of pupils achieving at least five A*-C grades was well above the national average. These pupils made good progress from their earlier Year 9 test results. A small group of lower-attaining pupils followed a non-accredited course run by the local authority. This lowered the school's overall results, which even so were still above average.

Differences in test and examination results of boys and girls are smaller than in most schools. Boys have done quite well relative to girls in Year 9, although this picture is reversed at GCSE. While girls have achieved better results than boys at GCSE, the margin narrowed in 2002 and was much smaller than the national difference. There are too few pupils from ethnic minorities in each year group to show any significant variation in performance by ethnicity.

Inspection evidence is that pupils make good progress in most subjects and make very good progress in art. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language also make good progress. Most pupils are achieving higher standards than might be expected from their attainment on entry to the school. Standards are above average in most subjects and are well above average by Year 11 in English, mathematics and history. The challenge provided for gifted and talented pupils is enabling them to make good progress. Standards on examination courses in information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education are secure but these courses are not followed by all pupils in Key Stage 4. Consequently overall standards in both subjects are below average by Year 11.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Most pupils develop positive attitudes to the school and to their learning, although a small number do not always take sufficient responsibility for their learning.
Behaviour, in and out of	The behaviour of most pupils is good in lessons and around the school and

classrooms	contributes to the calm atmosphere in which learning thrives.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils are increasing in confidence and self-esteem. They undertake duties well and generally establish harmonious relationships with each other and their teachers.
Attendance	Attendance has improved and although it was below average last year, further improvements have taken place since then.

Unauthorised absence is above average, but along with overall absence is skewed by the poor attendance of a small number of pupils. Punctuality has improved, although a small number of lessons do not start on time.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11
Quality of teaching	Good	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 since the last inspection and a high proportion is very good or excellent. This is the main reason why most pupils learn well and make good progress. Some of the consistently best teaching is in art, history and physical education. Teaching is good in English and mathematics. Science teaching is satisfactory. The pupils respond well in the large number of lively, interesting and challenging lessons, by working hard and showing considerable enthusiasm for their learning. Most teachers have a good command of their subject. This is shown through some highly skilled questioning which deepens the pupils' understanding and requires them to reply in detail. Literacy is promoted well in many subjects but the development of numeracy is given less attention other than in mathematics. In the small number of lessons where the teaching is dull and does not capture the pupils' imagination, many lose interest and cause minor disruption to learning which is not dealt with effectively. Pupils with special educational needs or English as an additional language learn well because teachers identify their particular needs and match their methods and the activities that they set accordingly.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and in conjunction with the wide range of extra-curricular activities meets well the needs, aptitudes and interests of the pupils, particularly in Years 10 and 11.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The needs of pupils are very carefully identified, appropriate courses are provided and learning support is effectively targeted in both subject and withdrawal lessons.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Language needs are carefully assessed. The support provided for the very small number of early learners of English is carefully targeted to good effect.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall provision for the pupils' personal development and for their spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. The promotion of social and moral development is good.

How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good arrangements have been adopted to support, guide and care for the welfare of the pupils.
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All National Curriculum requirements are met, with the exception of ICT in Years 10 and 11 and the use of ICT to support learning in other subjects. Assessment arrangements are good and pupils' progress is carefully monitored. Procedures to monitor and promote good behaviour and attendance are particularly effective. Excellent links have been forged between home and school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The clear direction provided by the headteacher and the very effective management procedures that he has introduced have had a considerable bearing on the school's improvement in recent years. Restructuring of the senior team and their roles has contributed significantly to this success.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are well-informed, have a good understanding of the school's strengths and support well the drive for improved standards.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Thorough and rigorous processes have been introduced to monitor the work of staff, evaluate the school's effectiveness and take steps to secure improvement particularly in the quality of teaching.
The strategic use of resources	Strong control has been established following a period when the school was in a parlous financial position and staffing levels were reduced. Funding has subsequently been used well to redress this position and increase the number of teachers.

Careful planning based upon an understanding of where the school needs to improve is playing a major role in raising standards. The principles of best value have not been formally adopted but are used well to inform financial planning. Staffing and learning resources are satisfactory overall, although there are insufficient computers. Accommodation is also satisfactory overall but has some shortcomings in art, music, design and technology and the changing facilities for physical education and not all teachers have a base from which to operate.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff have high expectations of their children. • The school is well led and managed. • They find staff approachable. • There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities, particularly for sport. • Their children like school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of homework and the consistency with which it is set.

The inspection team supports the parents' favourable opinions of the school. Responses to the questionnaire indicate that some parents are not happy with homework. Parents at the meeting reported some inconsistencies but that setting homework had improved following action taken in response to their previous concerns. Inspection evidence confirms this view.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. National Curriculum results for Year 9 pupils (Key Stage 3 Standard Assessment Tests) in English, mathematics and science fell in 2002 following improvements in the previous two years. English results in particular fell sharply from well above average in 2001 to below average in 2002. Over a third of pupils did not achieve the nationally expected standard for their age and very few pupils exceeded this level. These results were below similar schools and represented poor progress from the pupils' attainment on entry. Mathematics and science fared slightly better, mainly because a greater proportion achieved or exceeded expectations in both subjects. In spite of this, many pupils made slow progress from entry to the school. Results in these two subjects were close to the national average. When compared with similar schools, results were well above average in mathematics and above average in science.
2. The school has not been able to account fully for the sharp fall in English results, which were significantly out of step with the trend in previous years. At the school's request, all scripts were re-marked but with little overall difference. One factor was felt to be a failure to prepare sufficiently for the tests. Action has been taken to remedy this and to monitor more carefully the progress of pupils and the quality of teaching. Inspection evidence indicates that these actions along with the successful implementation of the Key Stage 3 strategy are having a beneficial effect in English and also in mathematics. Standards in the current Year 9 are higher than those achieved by last year's Year 9 in the 2002 tests, with a reasonable proportion of the year group now working at levels above that expected for their age. Standards overall in English are now above average in Year 9 as they also are in mathematics. The science department has gone through some staff changes recently and has not been able to show the same improvements as in English and mathematics. As a consequence, although most pupils are making satisfactory progress, standards are average.
3. Most pupils are keen to learn when the teaching is interesting. They make good and sometimes very good progress on these occasions but some pupils do not achieve as well as they should in the small proportion of dull and uninspiring lessons. A further factor that influences standards in non-core subjects in Years 7 to 9 is the variable experience of pupils in primary schools and the effect that this has on their attainment on entry. Attainment is broadly in line with that expected nationally of pupils by Year 9, the exceptions to this being in geography, history, modern languages and physical education where attainment is higher than expected and in music where it is below expected levels largely because of limitations on teaching time.
4. Boys have been doing well relative to girls in Year 9 tests. They have achieved better results in the last three years in mathematics and science. Although girls have achieved better results than boys in recent years in English, the gap has narrowed and was smaller than the national difference in 2002.
5. Overall GCSE results (as measured by the pupils' average total points score) were above the national average in 2002, an improvement over 2001, and were well above average when compared with similar schools. The proportion of pupils who gained at least five grades A*-C was well above average. These pupils made good progress in general from their earlier Year 9 test results. A particular strength, as at the last inspection, is that the proportion of the A* and A grades is above the national average in virtually all subjects. By contrast, the proportion of pupils who did not achieve a single A*-G grade in 2002 was well below average. This was largely accounted for by a group of pupils following a non-accredited course for low-attaining and disaffected pupils who did not sit any GCSE examinations.
6. Results in the core subjects of English language, mathematics and science were well above the national average in 2002. These results represented very good progress from the pupils'

corresponding Year 9 test results. Boys achieved a higher proportion of A*-C grades than girls in mathematics and science, while girls did better in English language. There has been some variation in overall performance between boys and girls at GCSE since the last inspection. Girls have regularly achieved better results, although only in 2000 and 2001 was this difference greater than nationally; however, the gap in 2002 was wider than when the corresponding pupils took their Year 9 tests. This group of girls, therefore, made slightly more rapid progress than the boys. Results in all subjects except for statistics (taken by the top mathematics set as a twilight course when in Year 10) were above the national average in 2002. On average, the pupils achieved their best results in French in 2002 and their weakest in English literature, physical education and design and technology. Results in the latter were also amongst the pupils' lowest results in 2001.

7. The pupils in Years 10 and 11 are achieving well. Standards in most subjects are above average and are well above average in English, mathematics and history. Changes to the curriculum and action taken to remedy the weaknesses in Year 10 attainment shown by their lower test results when in Year 9 are bearing fruit. Pupils are mostly keen to learn and are working hard, particularly on courses more suited to their aptitudes, interests and needs. It is only in terms of ICT skills and religious education that overall standards are below average. Not all pupils follow a course in ICT in Years 10 and 11. In spite of improvements most pupils still do not have sufficient planned opportunities to develop and apply their skills in other subjects. Changes to the curriculum have resulted in the introduction of a religious education course for all pupils. This has yet to work through to Year 11 where pupils are taught the subject through the personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme. This does not provide sufficient time for teaching to the depth required; however, the school plans to extend discrete religious education teaching into Year 11 next September.
8. About one-fifth of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, although no one group is represented in large numbers in any year group. The school is starting to analyse performance by ethnicity over several indicators; however at present, numbers of pupils taking tests and examinations from each minority ethnic group each year are too small to make valid comparisons.
9. Standards of literacy are good throughout the school. By Years 10 and 11 in particular, the pupils' levels of literacy enhance their learning in most subjects. Most pupils of all levels of ability respond willingly in question and answer sessions and many are articulate and confident in discussion. Higher-attaining pupils can take on the views of others and challenge them effectively as a means of developing their ideas. In history and drama pupils use role-play skilfully and regularly. Most pupils display good listening skills in response to clear expectations from their teacher. Pupils read efficiently for information, and the range of reading that they are expected to cope with shows an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils are sometimes asked to read passages aloud, in science for example, and can do so reasonably fluently. Writing skills are now systematically taught in several subjects. Pupils can write effectively in a wide variety of formats and use wordprocessing to present information clearly.
10. Standards of numeracy are good and teachers can rely on the pupils' proficiency to further their efficient learning in subjects where mathematics is often used. In science, for example, pupils efficiently ranked and tabulated decimal readings, producing good graphs of their results without the teacher having to revise the necessary skills. In geography, pupils were able readily to interpret data in order to further their understanding of factors relating to global warming. In ICT they draw on their algebraic understanding in mastering the application of spreadsheets. Provision for numeracy by mathematics specialists is good. They often use the beginning of lessons well to reinforce basic skills. In one, the teacher presented pupils briefly with a display of numbers to memorise and then expected them to recall the positions of the numbers in order to carry out mental calculations with them. A comprehensive numeracy policy has recently been supplemented with helpful guidance for non-specialists but it is not yet sufficiently widely used by other subject teachers for them to make a significant contribution to raising standards of numeracy in the way they do with literacy.
11. There are no significant differences between the achievements of different groups of pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language usually make the

progress expected and often exceed this. Pupils with special educational needs generally make good progress in lessons, with very good progress in physical education. One shortcoming is that there is no overall detailed charting of progress of pupils with special educational needs in terms of subject specific targets, for example in terms of National Curriculum levels, which allow analysis of individual progress over time and of specific groups of pupils at the school. The setting and review of individual education plans is thorough, based on excellent information gathering and in the majority of cases conducted with full support and participation by pupils and parents; however, pupil targets are far too general and do not focus on specific, clear and, most importantly, measurable outcomes which can be used more easily to assess progress and achievement. Good analysis of Year 11 special educational needs pupils' GCSE results shows that they generally do better than predicted. Gifted and talented pupils are generally well supported in lessons and through extra-curricular clubs and activities, except in modern languages where more activities could be provided.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. The attitudes and behaviour of the majority of pupils are good. Inspection findings confirm the parents' views that most pupils are happy to come to school, are courteous and show respect for staff and visitors.
13. In lessons most pupils are well motivated, interested and make positive contributions. They settle to work quickly at the beginning of lessons and concentrate well. They want to learn and appreciate the value of hard work. There is a small nucleus of pupils throughout the school, though, whose disaffection leads to poor attitudes to learning, despite several initiatives introduced by the school to support them. Their behaviour in lessons can be disruptive and disrespectful. Although most teachers manage this well, there are some lessons in which these pupils are allowed to disrupt the learning of the majority because the teachers do not deal with this poor behaviour effectively. Examples of very good behaviour management were seen in all subjects and this is consistently good in physical education. Pupils praised the firm but fair approach in lessons that maintained a brisk pace and offered challenging work which produced very good results.
14. The pupils' behaviour around the school and at lunchtimes is also good for the majority. Most queue patiently in the dining hall and are courteous and respectful to each other in the playground. There are a few instances of bullying but pupils and parents are mostly confident that these are dealt with quickly and fairly. The high level of staff supervision is a contributory factor in keeping bullying to a minimum. The relatively high though stable level of exclusions, 84 fixed period and four permanent last year, are a result of the firm line taken by the school over certain types of behaviour. In most cases pupils are excluded only once before modifying their behaviour. There are a few persistent offenders who are referred to a counsellor linked to the recently opened local Pupil Referral Unit for more specialised support.
15. Relationships are good. Most pupils relate well to their teachers and with each other. Staff provide good examples of how to behave and they address pupils with respect and consideration. The pupils speak highly of their teachers and value the spirit of co-operation, which creates a calm atmosphere in which to work. They say this is a significant change since the last inspection. Racial harmony is good. Most pupils show an understanding and tolerance of the diverse cultures and backgrounds in the school.
16. Pupils with special educational needs are 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 most teachers. One of the wheelchair users confirmed that physically disabled pupils enjoy their work and feel valued as members of the school community.
17. The pupils' personal development is a high priority, with the emphasis on increasing confidence and self-esteem. The wide range of extra-curricular activities offered and positions of responsibility contribute positively to this. Responsibilities increase as pupils progress through the school with a variety of opportunities such as school council representatives and team captains; most Year 11

pupils are prefects. At a school council meeting during the inspection the participants took their role very seriously and discussed the issues in a mature and tolerant way. Older pupils are encouraged to help younger ones through the shared reading scheme and several have trained as mentors. Pupils are encouraged to think of others less fortunate through a number of charity initiatives, which they embrace with enthusiasm.

18. Attendance for last year was below the national average, but is a considerable improvement since the last inspection and it has shown a steady upward trend. Figures for the most recent term show an even greater improvement. There are a few pupils whose attendance is very poor which significantly skews the overall figures. Close liaison with the Educational Welfare Service has resulted in improved attendance for some of these pupils. The school does everything it can to discourage family holidays during term time, but several parents choose to ignore this. Punctuality at the start of the school day is satisfactory for the majority but there are a few pupils who are often late. The school is working hard with these families to emphasise the importance of prompt arrival.
19. Parents spoke very positively about the changes that have taken place since the last inspection in the school's approach to behaviour and the pupils' attitudes, which have resulted in a much more harmonious atmosphere and better work ethic. They recognise that there are still some pupils who have yet to embrace this more positive attitude and are concerned that in some instances more needs to be done to minimise the disruption that they cause in lessons. The good behaviour of the majority of pupils, though, has a positive effect on their learning.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

20. Teaching across all year groups is good overall and has shown significant improvement since the last inspection. There is much more teaching that is very good, sometimes excellent and much less that is unsatisfactory. Teachers plan stimulating lessons that enable pupils to acquire the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding to learn well in class. There is no significant difference in the quality of teaching in different year groups but there is some variation between subjects. Teaching is generally good in all subjects and is most effective where lessons are conducted at a brisk pace, pupils are given challenging tasks and are managed well, for example in art, English and physical education; however, there are some shortcomings in the teaching of some groups in some subjects, for example in music and science where the slow pace of lessons and uninteresting work does not provide a stimulating environment for pupils. The Key Stage 3 national strategy has been implemented successfully in English and mathematics and is having a beneficial influence on planning and teaching. Activities to start lessons are inventive but there are times when review sessions at the end of lessons do not have sufficient impact on pupils' learning.
21. In the majority of lessons teachers use their high level of subject expertise to good effect by planning appropriately timed and sequenced lesson activities which build on prior learning. Confident and enthusiastic teachers and firm but friendly relationships provide pupils with an environment that promotes learning. A very good Year 9 physical education lesson by a football specialist ensured that all pupils made very good progress; the teacher used a series of well-planned, carefully structured and progressively more difficult activities to develop passing and dribbling skills. In an excellent Year 10 history lesson on the rise of the Nazi party, the teacher's innovative and challenging pair work fully engaged the interest and intellect of the pupils leading to an excellent standard of learning. Another excellent lesson, in which the pupils were preparing for the English GCSE examination, was observed where the teacher's impressive subject knowledge and planning, the challenging teaching and supportive comments ensured that the pupils enjoyed their learning of persuasive and argumentative writing techniques and made excellent progress.
22. Lessons are particularly effective where teachers manage pupils well, set high expectations of performance and behaviour and deal with instances of challenging behaviour efficiently and with a minimum of fuss. Firm control of potentially disruptive pupils in a very good Year 9 lesson ensured the pace and productivity of the lesson, on computer animation, and all pupils' enjoyment was not

compromised. Similarly, in a very good Year 11 geography lesson on population and a Year 9 keyboards lesson in music, the teachers maintained a very good learning environment with clearly expressed lesson objectives, the rewarding of pupil contributions with appropriate praise and the insistence on positive behaviour from all. Unfortunately, where appropriate classroom behaviour is not insisted upon, pupils do not fully participate in the lesson's activities and as a consequence do not make progress.

23. Resources are used very effectively by some teachers to make their lessons stimulating and interesting for pupils. In these lessons pupils show enthusiasm for their work and stay fully engaged in the activities designed by the teacher. For example the use of appropriate visual aids in a very good Year 10 art lesson on observational drawing focused the pupils' attention on different mark-making techniques, and combined with a positive, enjoyable learning environment, ensured that all pupils made very good progress in the lesson. In a very good Year 7 mathematics class, the well-prepared and enthusiastic teacher used a range of resources to aid understanding of how to estimate angles; this included the use of individual pupil white-boards and interesting and relevant computer software.
24. The teachers make it clear that they place equal value on the contribution of all pupils. They monitor the progress of individuals effectively and treat pupils according to their needs. In most lessons the pupils are given work that is matched to their attainment. This is a particularly strong feature of lessons in physical education, where the activities are very well matched to the pupils' needs. Teachers cater very well for pupils with special educational needs. They provide a range of differentiated activities to ensure that all pupils are included in lessons and make progress. Classroom support for statemented pupils is provided for all who need it and is very effective. In addition, learning support assistants provide general support in the classroom for all pupils who require it when not specifically assisting their designated pupil. The committed and knowledgeable special educational needs teachers observed prepared interesting and stimulating lessons, allowing pupils to make progress in a range of key areas, particularly literacy and communication. In a Year 7 physical education lesson, a pupil with cerebral palsy made progress well beyond expectations owing to good teacher exposition, very good, participative learning support and excellent peer co-operation and encouragement.
25. There are some shortcomings in lessons which do not provide the appropriate stimulus and activities to stretch all pupils. Where this is combined with challenging behaviour which is not successfully checked, pupils do not make progress in the required skills, knowledge and understanding in the topic being studied. Nonetheless, in the vast majority of lessons observed, which were brisk and involved a variety of demanding activities, pupils responded very well, enjoyed the lesson and often made progress beyond expectations; this was observed, for example, in a very good Year 9 gymnastics lesson creating floor routines and a very good Year 10 English lesson on narrative techniques. The marking of pupils' work, including homework, is usually thorough and contains informative feedback to pupils; however, there are some subjects where this is inconsistent and pupils are not made aware of what they need to do to improve. Finally, as some parents suggested, homework is now being set more consistently across the school and is more relevant to the needs of the pupils.

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

26. The quality and range of learning opportunities provided by the school are good. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum and the school has taken effective action to provide a curriculum that suits the needs of its pupils. This is particularly true for older pupils, who are able to choose from a wide range of GCSE options in order to follow a course that meets their own needs and aptitudes. In addition to GCSE subjects, some pupils study certificate courses in technology, travel and tourism or religious studies. ASDAN and CLAIT courses are also offered. The flexibility of the option system has a beneficial effect on the standards that pupils can attain.

27. A good range of extra-curricular activities is provided, covering most subjects. There is a choice of extra-curricular activities on offer every school day and the school hosts Saturday courses covering a wide range of topics. The physical education department offers a particularly wide range of activities, with several sports clubs operating every day. Many other subjects also run extra-curricular clubs and there are homework clubs, catch-up clubs and a breakfast club. In addition to these, a Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme is in operation and pupils have opportunities in many subjects for extra-curricular trips and visits, including trips abroad. The library is open every day before school, at breaks and at lunchtimes for pupils to pursue individual study. The range of opportunities on offer enriches the pupils' education beyond the normal curriculum and encourages high standards of attainment.
28. The National Key Stage 3 Strategy is being implemented in English, mathematics, science and ICT and is beginning to make an impact on teaching and learning. Appropriate attention is paid to the teaching of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum and good standards are being achieved. In spite of many improvements, the teaching of ICT in subjects is unsatisfactory, with statutory requirements not being met at Key Stage 4. The control and measurement strands of this subject are not being fully taught at either key stage. The school has a satisfactory personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme that includes citizenship and careers education. The allocation of time for each subject is satisfactory, except for music, where insufficient time is provided to study the subject properly in Years 7 to 9.
29. The school has good links with its partner schools, the local college and the careers service. These help to ensure continuity in the pupils' education. Curriculum evenings are well attended by parents. There are also good links with local charities.
30. Academically gifted and talented pupils are identified through the Year 7 induction and testing programme. These pupils, usually twelve, are then invited to participate in the Brunel University Critical Thinking Course and to attend specific events for the more able to develop their talents. There are many other gifted and talented pupils whom individual departments have identified and to whom additional support, guidance and opportunities for development are provided, for example in art and physical education. Many talented pupils in physical education play in regional and county teams. There is no overall school policy which ensures that all departments are identifying gifted and talented pupils and providing them with additional support and activities which fully utilise and develop their skills and talents.
31. Curriculum provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The school runs a range of courses for all years which provides for all needs and abilities. These include a very effective life skills course in Years 8 and 9 that pupils attend over a ten-week period. This has led to many pupils being able to cope better with the demands of school work and school life generally. A Year 8 literacy and language scheme provides additional support for those pupils who require it. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are offered a range of interesting and appropriate courses where the GCSE options are not always the most appropriate. The range of courses offered ensures that all pupils are able to access courses which suit their needs and strengths. The school also promotes reading skills through its successful paired reading scheme where Year 7 pupils are mentored by Year 10 pupils - an activity which benefits both pupils.
32. The quality of the school's provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall. There are extensive opportunities in art, physical education and English, based on a recently reviewed, well-written school policy. Provision for moral and social development is good. Opportunities for discussion exist in most subject areas. The pupils' work on *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller in English is impressive; in physical education pupils reflect on moral and social issues relating to sport, including disability and race, and in geography and modern foreign languages they discuss environmental matters. The many opportunities for social development include the after-school drama club, teams and leadership in physical education and pair and group work in most subjects. Assemblies and registration periods provide a good social context for the school day and combine with activities such as the school council to promote a sense of community; however, not all departments have indicated how they intend to offer the opportunities for spiritual development described in the policy and the school has not yet started to monitor and evaluate its effectiveness. There is no act of collective worship or other means of

encouraging quiet reflection daily. Several areas of the curriculum, including art, dance, geography, modern foreign languages, music and religious education, offer the chance to develop awareness of many world cultures, but other subjects have not yet contributed sufficiently to this aspect.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

33. Orleans Park School gives very good care, support and guidance to its pupils. A new system of pastoral responsibilities has led to better communication between staff and ensures a consistently high level of support. This support begins even before pupils join the school, with very effective liaison with primary schools where each prospective pupil is visited, and a very well-structured induction programme. Several initiatives such as the mentoring scheme help to identify those pupils who need extra support at an earlier stage. Options guidance for Year 9 pupils and guidance for those moving on to colleges for the sixth form are very good and appreciated by pupils. Child protection procedures follow the local authority guidelines and the responsible officer makes sure that teachers are instructed on following these.
34. The high expectations of good behaviour are promoted through an effective and consistently applied policy, which includes clear anti-bullying strategies, producing good results. The new management structure ensures greater accountability and consistency of practice but, despite regular monitoring, training in behaviour management for new staff and sharing of good practice, not all teachers are equally effective in handling difficult pupils. The school has worked hard to offer a range of options for disaffected pupils such as the life skills course, extended work experience and counselling, with some degree of success. The senior prefects spoke of a greater sense of pride in belonging to the school since the last inspection. They cite the stricter uniform rules and a greater emphasis on academic achievement and effort as contributory factors. The good level of supervision at lunchtimes promotes good behaviour in the playground and several staff are qualified in first aid should accidents occur.
35. Monitoring of the pupils' personal development is very good. Detailed records are kept by the staff responsible for monitoring and where practicable, form tutors and year leaders follow pupils through the school, thus building on their knowledge of the pupils' development. Personal development is promoted through the PSHE curriculum, which is appropriate to the pupils' maturity and understanding.
36. Monitoring of attendance is good. The school works closely with the Educational Welfare Service to monitor those pupils whose attendance falls below a certain level. The administrative assistant who is responsible for operating the computerised system prepares attendance sheets for each form on a weekly basis and absences are rigorously followed up. A detailed record of each pupil's attendance is included in his or her annual and progress reports so that parents, too, are fully aware of their attendance. There are new effective procedures for monitoring pupils who arrive late. A senior member of staff monitors late arrivals each day, emphasising the importance the school places on prompt arrival.
37. Health and safety procedures are very good. They follow the local authority guidelines and risk assessment is carried out regularly. Governors monitor the accident and incident books at each meeting to ensure that procedures are being carried out consistently and effectively. There were no issues of particular concern raised during this inspection.
38. The school has effective systems in place for the regular assessment of pupils' attainment and its use to review their progress and inform parents. The procedures for supporting pupils' learning, although satisfactory overall, vary considerably between subjects. They are used very well in history and geography to plan the next stages of the pupils' learning and to increase the pupils' understanding of the direction that their efforts need to take in order to improve. They are good in English, science and art, where pupils are provided with regular indications of the level of their work. Similar arrangements apply in music and modern languages, although these are not so well established. The system that has been devised for use in design and technology is not applied in

all areas of the subject. In Years 10 and 11 assessment in ICT is unsatisfactory. Pupils who are not following the GCSE course are not provided with assessments of their work in ICT. There is no common practice that routinely informs pupils of precisely how they can work successfully to improve the standard of their work in all subjects.

39. The school now has a good record of pupils' attainment when they enter the school. This is used well to determine targets for the level (in Years 7 to 9) or grade (Years 10 to 11) that each pupil is expected to reach or exceed. These are used to monitor pupils' progress and to provide a basis for reviewing the effectiveness of subjects. Art, modern languages and physical education identify targets based on assessments made in the school early in Year 7; physical education does not do so sufficiently early enough for them to be used to monitor or direct work effectively. The target-setting procedures have not been established long enough for them to be evaluated. The procedures for monitoring and evaluating improvements in pupils' attainment are good and provide a clear picture of the results of different groups of pupils such as those from ethnic minorities or those in different sets in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. In this way, the school is able to identify any evident areas of underachievement so as to take action.
40. Pupils with special educational needs are identified at an early stage through extensive liaison with feeder primary schools and external agencies and through a range of standardised tests which all pupils take early in Year 7. This enables the learning support department to allocate appropriate learning support to individuals and, crucially, to provide advice and guidance to subject staff on how best to ensure that these pupils are best catered for in lessons. When pupils enter the school, their reading and literacy competence is extensively assessed so that those with special educational needs can be identified and good provision made for them. Teachers and learning support assistants know their pupils well and provide them with effective help in lessons. The pupils' individual education plans do not have sufficiently precise short-term targets that can be used either in planning or in reviewing their progress accurately. The pupils' progress is routinely recorded, and it is matched against predictions in Year 11. GCSE achievement of pupils with special educational needs is not analysed in relation to other pupils' achievement.
41. The school has improved the level of support and guidance since the last inspection and this has contributed to the rise in attendance and academic standards.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

42. Parents responded positively to the questionnaire and at the parents' meeting about most aspects of the school. Most parents who responded said that the school is well led and managed; their children are expected to work hard; they feel comfortable approaching the school; there is an interesting range of extra-curricular activities and that teaching is good. The areas those parents felt less happy about were the consistency of homework, the information they received about their children's progress and whether the school works closely with parents. The inspection findings support the parents' favourable views but the evidence gained was contrary to parents' opinions on homework, information given and the close partnership with parents. The school has introduced new procedures for monitoring the consistency of homework following consultation with parents and pupils, which have resulted in improvements and this is continuing in order to ensure sustained improvement. During the inspection, the homework given was consistent with the school's homework policy.
43. The school's links with parents are excellent compared with other schools. Parents praised the increased approachability and spirit of co-operation of the staff since the last inspection. The defensiveness of some staff mentioned in the last report no longer occurs. Parents receive a very wide range of information. This includes detailed curriculum booklets, progress reports as well as annual reports, which are of a high standard, regular newsletters, access to a web site with regularly updated information and good quality governors' annual reports, prospectus and subject information. The school works very closely with parents not only when problems occur but also to inform them of pupils' good achievement and effort. It involves parents at an early stage and works with them to support pupils experiencing difficulties. The parents of some pupils have been invited

to the school to shadow their children over a four-day period to give them an insight into what their children do at school and this is to be extended to other parents. All parents of pupils with special educational needs are invited to attend their annual reviews. The school is keen to involve parents in promoting positive attitudes and makes clear to them its policies for dealing with intimidating or racist behaviour. Parents are kept informed and involved where there are concerns about progress or attitudes.

44. The parents' support of the school is also excellent and has improved tremendously since the last inspection. Parents who serve on the governing body are very committed and contribute a wide range of expertise. The parent/teacher association (OPSA) raises significant funds and donated over £11,000 last year. It arranges several events throughout the year, which are very well supported by both parents and staff and the headteacher attends all meetings. It has developed a school web site, has decorated several areas of the school and supports charity events and sports matches. The school and OPSA have worked hard to encourage even greater support and involvement from parents of pupils from ethnic minorities but with limited success. They are continuing to develop further ways to encourage this group of parents to become more involved.
45. Since the last inspection, Orleans Park's standing within the community has increased significantly and this is reflected in the fact that it is now heavily over-subscribed and parents make a positive choice to send their children to the school. Parents and pupils are proud to be connected with the school. Involvement in the local community has increased in a variety of ways and is often linked with other secondary schools in the borough.
46. The excellent links with parents and their commitment to the school have a very positive effect on the pupils' attitudes and learning overall.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

47. Several significant weaknesses were reported at the last inspection in leadership and management. Governors initiated some of the important changes that have subsequently taken place, including the appointment of a new headteacher just over three years ago. Parents, pupils, staff and governors all speak highly of the headteacher and his impact on the school. Many put the rise in standards and the improvement in the school's standing in the community down to his strong, firm and calm leadership. He has a clear view of what needs to be done and how to achieve it, along with a determination to succeed. This has been transmitted to all associated with the school. Staff are responding well to the direction and clarity that he is giving to their work. They are very willing to reflect on their practice and seek ways of improving. This has resulted in considerable progress in the last few years, and places the school in a very strong position to secure further improvement.
48. The restructuring of the senior team has been a significant factor in managing change and sustaining the momentum towards higher standards. Members of the team undertake their roles most effectively and have been instrumental in helping to shape the school's direction. They work well as a team. The practice of co-opting two members of staff to this team on an annual basis provides valuable professional development while bringing fresh views. Other staff with management responsibilities make a significant contribution and they are made to account for the work of their departments through a well-structured system of line management. The learning support department is very well led and managed. Teaching staff are effectively led and deployed and are encouraged to play a full part in the development of the learning support department.
49. There are clear policies to include all pupils fully in the work of the school, both within the curriculum and in the wider life of the school. The progress of pupils is monitored and it is made clear that all are expected to achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Effective links have been established with community groups such as the police and local charities, who are able to support the school's efforts to ensure that all of its pupils can benefit from a broad and relevant education.

50. The use of data and its analysis and interpretation is an increasingly prominent feature of school management. Plans to extend this further as more data becomes available are in hand. For example, the school intends to monitor a wide range of indicators by ethnicity as part of its Race Equality Policy, to identify whether its actions are disadvantaging any particular groups of pupils. Procedures to manage and improve the performance of teachers are particularly effective. The school is becoming particularly adept at monitoring and reviewing the work of staff. These tools are being used well to target action to improve teaching, for example through training, peer observation, advice and further guidance. The introduction of the Key Stage 3 strategy has been carefully reviewed and action taken to improve its implementation. These processes have played a considerable part in enabling the school to improve and to meet its challenging targets.
51. Governors are playing a very significant part in the improvement of the school. They have considerable experience, expertise and a strong commitment to the school's success. Many give freely of their time in support of the school. They are heavily involved in shaping the school's direction through policy-making and review, the annual development plan process, as well as the major task of helping to prepare the successful bid for Specialist School Status. Governors are able to gain a clear picture of where the school is successful and where improvements are needed, through both the well-organised committee structure, formal links with departments and regular contact with the school. The special educational needs co-ordinator ensures that the governor responsible for this area of provision is furnished with relevant information to ensure that the school complies with the requirements of the revised Code of Practice, for example in the provision of appropriate arrangements for the two wheelchair users at the school.
52. When the headteacher arrived at the school, the finances were in a poor state. The budget was in deficit, with projections that this position would deteriorate further. Financial management was weak, with inadequate monitoring of spending and no inventory of assets. Staffing had to be reduced to balance the books, initially severely denting staff morale. The position was rapidly stabilised. Financial planning is now much more effective and budget management secure. The recommendations of the most recent audit report have been acted upon and an up-to-date inventory has been established. Careful and prudent planning and management of resources have enabled several educational priorities to be funded, such as the substantial improvement in computer facilities. Resources for ICT have also improved considerably but remain below the level needed to enable pupils to have access to computers on a regular basis. Staffing levels are slowly improving, although some large classes remain. The principles of best value are used well, even though they have not been formally adopted by governors. Performance and spending are carefully compared with similar schools, parents' views are sought on major proposed developments, targets are challenging and value for money is sought from all financial decisions by having criteria by which success can be judged.
53. Staffing overall is satisfactory, although the school has an above average pupil to teacher ratio. All subjects have suitably qualified staff, although the relatively high recent turnover means that there are several inexperienced teachers. An improved induction programme has helped staff to settle in and to become effective more quickly. Staff development is well organised and monitored to ensure that training is available to all staff in a wide range of topics. The quality of support staff for pupils with special educational needs is very good. They are trained to meet the needs of the individual pupils that they help, and teachers welcome the support that they give in class. Technical support in science is adequate, and although not all technicians are formally qualified, they have had suitable training; however, in ICT there are inadequate suitably qualified technicians to keep the equipment working fully. This impacts on pupils' learning in ICT.
54. There are some shortcomings in the accommodation. It is good for several subjects, for example modern foreign languages, physical education and mathematics, but is unsatisfactory for art, religious education, design and technology, citizenship and music. Some of these areas, for instance design and technology and music, need refurbishment. Others such as citizenship and religious education have either no base or insufficient space for each teacher to have his or her own room, which has a detrimental effect on some teaching. Changing accommodation in physical education is poor. The drama studio doubles as a very small school hall. It can only accommodate one year group at a time for assemblies. Many departments have very good wall

displays and in some this compensates for the drab surroundings. Accommodation and resources for special educational needs are good, although some of the recently purchased ICT software is not yet in use.

55. Resources are at least adequate for most subjects and in some cases, for example mathematics, physical education, modern foreign languages and English they are at least good; however, they are unsatisfactory in music and science. In music they are insufficient for the adequate delivery of the curriculum, and in science, although there is no shortage of basic equipment, the ICT resources are inadequate. This has an adverse effect on teaching and learning despite the best efforts of the teachers. The library is a valuable resource and makes a significant contribution to learning, particularly in English and cultural development. It is welcoming and is open before and after school for pupils' private study, and is also used by the homework club and Year 7 club. Pupils spoke of it as a valuable resource for the school. It is well run and well resourced. There is a wide range of books which include challenging books for the more able and a good range of titles for poorer readers. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

56. To continue the good progress that has been made in recent years and to raise standards further, the school should:
- (1) Improve access to computer facilities for all pupils by: (paragraphs 7, 28, 38, 54, 116, 118 and 119)
 - monitoring rigorously the use of ICT in subjects to ensure that all National Curriculum requirements are met
 - establishing arrangements for the assessment of the pupils' ICT capability in Years 10 and 11
 - providing technical support and time for management of the computer networks to ensure that all resources can function properly
 - (2) Improve teaching in the small number of lessons which do not provide sufficient challenge and stimulation to maintain the interest of the pupils, reduce the interruption to learning that can ensue and ensure that pupils in general take greater responsibility for their learning. (paragraphs 13, 19 and 25)

The first item has been identified as a major priority for development in the 2002/03 school improvement plan.

Other issues which should be considered by the school

57. In addition to the items above, the governors may wish to consider the inclusion of the following points in their action plan:
- Bring greater coherence to the programmes for gifted and talented pupils. (paragraph 30)
 - Provide more opportunities for reflection during the school day. (paragraphs 32)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	155
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	50

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	5	41	50	50	8	1	0
Percentage	3	26	32	32	5	1	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	1021
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	144

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	47
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	157

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	116

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	32
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	30

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.0
National comparative data	7.8

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	2.3
National comparative data	1.2

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage (Year 9)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	132	63	195

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 5 and above	Boys	71	101	97
	Girls	40	47	43
	Total	111	148	140
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	School	57 (76)	76 (74)	72 (72)
	National	66 (64)	67 (66)	66 (66)
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 6 or above	School	17 (40)	45 (51)	27 (43)
	National	32 (31)	45 (43)	33 (34)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 5 and above	Boys	109	108	94
	Girls	52	48	42
	Total	161	156	136
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	School	83 (63)	81 (80)	71 (60)
	National	67 (65)	70 (68)	71 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 6 or above	School	39 (37)	58 (60)	19 (32)
	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	120	74	194

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	75	104	110
	Girls	49	67	69
	Total	124	171	179
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	64 (59)	88 (94)	92 (96)
	National	50 (48)	91 (91)	96 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE points score
Average points score per pupil	School	42.3 (40.2)
	National	39.8 (39.0)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	790	73	3
White – Irish	5	1	
White – any other White background	60		
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	14		
Mixed – White and Black African	6		
Mixed – White and Asian	9		
Mixed – any other mixed background	19	10	1
Asian or Asian British - Indian	38	1	1
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	4		
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	10		
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	11		
Black or Black British – Caribbean	5		
Black or Black British – African	7		
Black or Black British – any other Black background	4		
Chinese	4		
Any other ethnic group	24		
No ethnic group recorded	11		

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

Teachers and classes

Financial information

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	54.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.7

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	337.5

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Financial year	2001/02
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	£
Total income	3,231,707
Total expenditure	3,232,130
Expenditure per pupil	3,188

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	70.7
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Average teaching group size: Y7– Y11

Key Stage 3	25.8
Key Stage 4	23.9

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Balance brought forward from previous year	46,787
Balance carried forward to next year	46,364

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	24.6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	26.1

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	3.0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	3.0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1021
Number of questionnaires returned	151

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	39	53	8	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	40	48	9	2	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	17	65	10	1	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	17	57	17	6	2
The teaching is good.	21	63	7	0	9
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	35	51	12	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	50	45	5	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	52	43	5	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	31	51	17	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	52	39	2	0	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	45	43	7	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	46	48	3	0	2

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

- Pupils use talk confidently and flexibly to demonstrate and develop their learning.
- They take a pride in their work and set and review targets to help themselves to develop as readers and writers.
- Large numbers of pupils reach high standards in GCSE.
- The best teaching is very energetic and motivating.
- The department is very well led and responds effectively to initiatives.

Areas for improvement

- The department should employ a consistent approach to encouraging individual pupils to learn from their spelling mistakes.
- Successful teaching methods which promote high standards should be more widely used by all staff.

58. In the national Standard Assessment Tests (SATs) at the end of Year 9 in 2002 pupils achieved results below the national average, when compared both with all schools and with similar schools. They made less progress than expected from the standards they had achieved by the time they entered the school and did less well in English than in mathematics and science. At Level 5 and higher, and particularly at Level 6 and higher, both boys and girls performed less well than their counterparts elsewhere. These results, however, are unusual for pupils in this school. Over the last three years pupils have always achieved more of the higher grades than the national average, with very good results in 2001. Staff shortages and difficulties played a significant part in the pupils' lower achievement in 2002. Pupils' performance has been thoroughly analysed and there are now rigorous measures in place to raise standards in 2003. These focus both on the current Year 9 and on pupils now in Year 10.
59. GCSE results in 2002 were very good. Building on successful attainments in their Year 9 tests, pupils went on to achieve grades well above the national average for both English and English literature. There was an impressive number of the highest grades. Girls outperformed boys, as they do nationally in English, but the school gap between their achievements has steadily narrowed since the last inspection; boys at this school gain many more A and B grades than boys do nationally. Pupils with special educational needs made good progress and all pupils entered were awarded a grade. Most pupils also studied English literature. Although they did slightly less well here than in the average of all their other subjects, pupils achieved A*-C grades well above the national average, for boys significantly so.
60. Teaching is good overall and at both key stages. On the basis of work seen during the inspection, attainment is above national expectations in Year 9 and well above them in Year 11. Most pupils enter the school with good attainment for their age and make good progress. Some of the higher-attaining pupils are reaching very high standards by the end of Year 9, while those with special educational needs respond very well to the support provided. There are no significant variations for pupils whose first language is not English; the small number of pupils who are at an early stage of learning English respond well to teaching which takes account of their needs. Most pupils are keen to meet their teachers' high expectations. The marking of their written work reveals the teachers' thorough knowledge of individuals' strengths and weaknesses. Pupils are encouraged to set themselves targets which are checked and modified. They make good use of the homework club and Year 7 quiet study area in the library. In GCSE classes pupils achieve high standards and use class time well when the teaching is brisk in pace and expects high levels of involvement from each individual. A few middle-attaining pupils need firmer guidelines and greater challenges

to channel their energies and encourage them to display a more mature and purposeful attitude in class.

61. In Years 7 and 8 many pupils are already confident talkers with impressive vocabularies. In mixed-ability classes where stimulating speaking and listening activities are well structured and tightly controlled, all pupils benefit from the chance to learn through discussion. In a Year 7 class analysing the effects of camera shots and angles all pupils enthusiastically answered questions, listened carefully to one another and covered a wide range of ideas in a short time. In a few classes some pupils are not yet self-disciplined listeners and time is wasted when teachers have to interrupt the flow of a lesson to remind them to pay attention to the ideas of others. By Year 9, however, most pupils share and evaluate ideas very effectively. They are particularly successful at justifying and expanding their views. In GCSE classes pupils also make their best contributions when working to clear instructions and deadlines. A Year 10 class studying *To Kill a Mockingbird* moved economically from individual and pair work to working together as a class to compile a character profile through lively discussion. Boys and girls collaborate very effectively in group work.
62. Reading standards are high in Years 7 to 9. In lessons reflecting the principles of the National Literacy Strategy, pupils demonstrate a lively interest in the features of different types of texts and are successfully expanding their repertoire of terms to analyse them. They also read plenty of texts, supported by a well-stocked and welcoming library, which has improved considerably since the last inspection. Boys in a Year 8 class talked enthusiastically about their reading and had covered a very good range of fiction and non-fiction. Most pupils read aloud fluently and expressively. Pupils analyse media texts with skill and enthusiasm. These are well represented in schemes of work in Key Stage 3 and form a very good foundation for the media requirement in GCSE English and for pupils choosing GCSE media studies as an option. In a Year 11 media studies lesson on film genre, the pupils displayed good knowledge of key terms and explored difficult concepts. In Years 10 and 11 most pupils demonstrate confidence and detailed knowledge in talking and writing about texts. Most have a sound knowledge of technical terms which they can apply with little or no prompting. Although used for word processing, ICT is under-used as a tool for analysing and manipulating text because of inadequate access to computers and lack of technical support.
63. Pupils' writing in Key Stage 3 shows the benefits of teachers' understanding of the Literacy Strategy. From Year 7 on they are encouraged to consider the purpose and audience for each piece of writing. Most pupils of all levels of ability show a pride in their writing. Standards of handwriting and wordprocessing are generally good. Most pupils punctuate and organise their writing competently; some Year 7 writers, for example, use semi-colons to good effect. Spelling has improved since the last inspection, although many pupils fail to log and practise words that regularly trip them up. In GCSE classes pupils are particularly skilful at using opportunities for short bursts of writing to organise their thoughts and prepare for discussion. This was seen working well in two different contexts: a lower-attaining class of Year 11 pupils wrote short, structured responses to a poem which gave them the confidence to discuss it together later; a higher-attaining Year 10 group were very efficient in writing brief, sharply focused statements about a novelist's methods of building character, which they later shared and developed. Pupils' coursework folders contain lively and well-structured writing and they handle narrative and discursive writing with equal sureness.
64. The school has a comprehensive literacy policy, containing useful examples of good practice. Senior managers are monitoring effectively its impact across departments. It is most successful in subjects where it is used to complement careful assessment and target setting and to stimulate discussion about effective teaching styles. The policy is helping to raise standards because it has been understood and welcomed by staff and is working simultaneously on a number of fronts. Displays in classrooms and public areas highlight subject vocabulary, and in discussion teachers make explicit and regular reference to key terms in art, music, English, modern languages and humanities. Good opportunities for sustained reading or independent research are offered in history, geography, religious education and ICT. The special educational needs department assesses pupils' reading and writing levels quickly when they arrive, makes this information easily

accessible to departments and offers training and advice to subject staff. Parent volunteers offer valuable literacy support in summer school, and weaker readers in Year 7 benefit from older pupils' support in a paired reading scheme; this also contributes significantly to the personal development of the Year 10 volunteers. The library adds an important dimension to the development of pupils' literacy. It is a stimulating and pleasant environment which encourages the development of reading for pleasure and independent research. It supports departments which use it to foster pupils' information retrieval skills. It is especially well-used in English and humanities lessons, though under used by modern languages.

65. The department is very well led, giving both direction and support to a large team which includes non-specialists and works in two separate areas of the school. The strategies for raising standards, short and longer-term, are very well conceived. Particular initiatives, such as strategies for raising the achievement of boys, have been used to increase staff awareness about improving the learning of all pupils; this is having a beneficial effect on pupils' motivation. Currently the management of the department is shared very effectively. Responsibilities and lines of communication are clear to all staff and enable new teachers rapidly to make a positive impact on the work of their pupils. Well-organised and up-to-date schemes of work for Years 7 to 9 and a consistent assessment policy are especially beneficial here. The management of recent initiatives, such as the Literacy Strategy, the introduction of GCSE media studies and the separate teaching of drama in Years 7 to 9, has been efficient. In a time of considerable staff changes the department leadership has been reassuringly calm and optimistic.
66. To maintain progress and raise standards further, the department should ensure that all staff consistently use pupil data to track individual progress and, particularly, to accelerate it in Key Stage 3. Greater access to computers and to some input from a technician within the English base would support this; it would also improve the teaching of aspects of the GCSE media studies syllabus. Staff should continue to observe each other's lessons and to use more consistently those teaching strategies which are helping pupils to succeed.

Drama

67. The pupils' attainment in GCSE drama is very good. In 2002, from a large entry, virtually all pupils gained A*-C grades. Overall, these results were well above average. Pupils who entered for drama achieved particularly well in comparison with their average in all other subjects. Work seen during the inspection confirms these high standards. Year 11 pupils worked with energy, enthusiasm and excellent self-discipline to analyse the creation of dramatic tension and apply it in their improvisations. Written work is of a very high standard, demonstrating well-developed skills of evaluation. The pupils write with confidence and have good knowledge of the features of different genres.
68. Since the last inspection drama has been taught separately at Key Stage 3. Standards by Year 9 are good. Although Year 9 pupils have experienced separate drama lessons for only four terms, they demonstrate good knowledge of drama conventions. Most pupils make effective use of gesture, expression and basic props and respond thoughtfully to one another's work. They can evaluate their own performances and develop them by building on the teacher's constructive criticisms and high expectations. Pupils have many opportunities for social and moral development in drama and enjoy the chance to take responsibility for their own learning. Pupils with special educational needs and those whose first language is not English contribute successfully in a secure and stimulating setting. Teaching is rigorous and lessons are purposeful and well structured. Two well-attended after-school clubs offer excellent opportunities for pupils to extend their interest and expertise in drama.
69. The recently appointed head of department has achieved a great deal in one term. Leadership and management of the department are very good because they promote high standards. The small but enthusiastic team of drama teachers is a committed and effective group. Clear schemes of work in Key Stage 3 enable teachers to observe one another's work and further develop good practice. Drama is making an important contribution to the development of pupils' creativity and collaborative skills throughout the school.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- Standards are high at GCSE.
- Good teaching raises standards of achievement.
- The well-led and managed team of teachers is committed to raising standards.

Areas for improvement

- Consistently good teaching is needed to improve overall achievement in Years 7 to 9.
- Teachers should tell pupils how specific improvements to their work relate to their target levels.
- Monitoring should be directed towards improving consistency and the quality of homework and marking.

70. Results of National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were in line with the national average and that of similar schools. Boys generally made satisfactory progress. The lower than expected results of a small but significant group of pupils, predominantly girls, accounts for the 2002 results being lower than those in the previous three years. The proportion of pupils reaching Level 5 or higher was as expected from their attainment on entering the school so that, overall, pupils' progress by the end of Year 9 was satisfactory. Results were above those in English and similar to those in science.
71. In 2002, GCSE results in mathematics were well above the national average. Boys' results were better than those of girls, reflecting the differences in their prior attainment at the end of Year 9. These results represent good progress since that time. Generally, pupils achieved as well in mathematics as they did in other subjects. High-attaining pupils achieved very high standards. The proportion gaining the highest grades of A* or A was considerably higher than nationally. Statistics results were broadly in line with the national average.
72. Standards are above average in the current Years 7 to 9. Overall, pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is not their first language, are making satisfactory progress. They master a good range of skills and knowledge across all areas of study and achieve good standards of numeracy. The quality of teaching is generally good but varies too widely for learning generally to be better than satisfactory. At its best, very good teaching captures a high level of pupil interest. As a result, they make a productive intellectual effort and rise to the challenge of their teachers' high expectations. For example, by exciting the pupils' curiosity, the teacher of a Year 7 class built on their recent learning by introducing them to formal proof in geometry. They were stimulated by this and had a significant sense of achievement, discussing in a lively way the important distinction between rigorous proof and examples of individual cases that showed the angle sum of a triangle to be 180° . In the least successful lessons, pupils are not sufficiently stimulated to work effectively without close direction by the teacher. This occasionally leads to uninterested pupils becoming disruptive. Pupils do not often understand how particular work on which they are engaged relates to their longer-term targets for attainment. Consequently, some do not see the point of investing effort, resulting in casual attitudes, lack of interest and careless presentation.
73. Standards are well above average in Year 11. Those in the current Year 10 are not so high, corresponding with the pupils' earlier attainment, but nonetheless they show a good rate of progress from Year 9. Work in statistics is particularly strong. Pupils are taught to apply a wide range of techniques well, although they do not generally interpret the significance of their results as well as they carry out calculations and draw graphs. Teaching in these years is good and more consistent than in Years 7 to 9. As a result the pupils make sustained good progress, especially the most talented, who achieve very well. Standards of numeracy are generally good, although some lower-attaining pupils have enduring weak knowledge of multiplication tables and so rely on immature methods that hamper their progress in simple algebra and operations with fractions and statistics. Teachers conduct lessons at a brisk pace with well-directed questioning that ensures

wide participation by pupils. Marking checks for accuracy but provides little indication of how pupils might improve their work. On the few occasions where teachers identify poor presentation as an area for improvement, it is rarely followed up so standards in this aspect of work remain weak. The pupils generally have a clear idea of their target grade and tests show them their weaknesses so they can focus their revision effectively. The attendance records of some pupils are poor and so they do not make sufficient progress. Generally however, all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, learn effectively, make good progress and achieve well.

74. Overall, teaching is good. Teachers have made serious efforts to incorporate the most recent guidance (the Key Stage 3 strategy) into their work. This is used well throughout the school but is particularly effective in the 'catch up' work done with Year 7. Where there is a poor match of work to the pupils' capability, learning is unsatisfactory. The teachers generally make a purposeful start to lessons, but only in a few instances were teachers seen to conclude lessons efficiently. Those that did so used the time to review and reinforce earlier learning well. Often pupils do not see the final, very important part of the lesson as something requiring much effort, many seeing it as an opportunity to pack away. Teachers emphasise the correct use of specialist vocabulary and, in the best lessons, promote speaking and listening well. ICT is incorporated into mathematics teaching in accordance with the National Curriculum requirements.
75. The department is well led and managed. The introduction of the Key Stage 3 strategy has been well managed and is already showing beneficial results in both teaching effectiveness and pupils' achievement. Standards are closely monitored by gender, and the monitoring of pupils from ethnic minorities and other groups has recently been introduced in order to identify when provision might need to be reviewed. Monitoring of teaching is good and effective action is taken to secure improvements, but some inconsistencies in expected practice such as marking and homework have not been given sufficient attention. The improvements in the quality of teaching and higher standards of attainment by the end of Year 11 indicate that overall, improvement since the time of the last inspection has been very good.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- The pupils make good progress in Years 10 and 11 and achieve GCSE results that are well above average.
- Most pupils have a good knowledge of the scientific facts and vocabulary associated with the topics that they have studied.
- In most lessons the teachers make clear to the pupils exactly what they are expected to learn.
- All pupils are given individual target grades in order to help them to make good progress.
- A good start has been made on introducing some of the teaching ideas and approaches from the national Key Stage 3 strategy.

Areas for improvement

- In some lessons the teachers do not plan activities that are varied enough to keep the pupils interested and engaged in their work.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in experimental and investigative science.
- The teachers do not make the most of the time available in some lessons.
- Marking of pupils' work is inconsistent and does not always tell them how to improve.
- Computer equipment is not being used sufficiently in lessons to help pupils to learn.

76. In the national tests taken at the end of Year 9 (Key Stage 3 SATs) in 2002, pupils achieved results that were slightly above the national average for all schools and above the average for similar schools. These results were similar to the mathematics results and above the results in

English. The results have improved over the last five years at about the same rate as the national results, although the 2002 results remained at the same level as 2001. There were no significant differences in the results achieved by different groups of pupils. Pupils with special educational needs achieved the results that would be expected when compared with their results at the end of Key Stage 2. GCSE results in 2002 were well above average and well above results in similar schools. The pupils' results in science were about the same as in their other subjects and there was no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language achieved the results that would be expected on the basis of their Key Stage 3 SAT results. Many pupils achieved results that were higher than would be expected when compared with their previous Key Stage 3 results. GCSE targets set for the subject were achieved.

77. The standards achieved in lessons and in the pupils' written work are above average throughout the school in knowledge and understanding of materials, life processes and physical processes; however, the standards in experimental and investigative science are below average because the pupils are not given enough opportunities to develop their skills in this area. This means that standards overall in lessons and written work are average. The arrangements for assessing the pupils' progress through regular testing are effective and all pupils are given minimum target grades so that they are aware of the standards they are expected to attain. This helps the pupils to make progress in their learning; however, the standards of routine marking of pupils' work are inconsistent and do not always give pupils guidance on how to improve their work. Homework is set regularly and the pupils have a record of homework completed in their books. This encourages high standards and helps the pupils to make progress.
78. The pupils in Years 7 to 9 generally have good recall of work they have covered previously and they can answer factual questions in some detail. For example, pupils in Year 7 can identify the forces acting on a parachute and can recall facts about the planets in the solar system. Year 8 pupils show good knowledge of the structure and function of the digestive system and have quite good background knowledge on the prevention of disease. The pupils in Year 9 generally have a good knowledge of work they have covered on a range of topics including metals, genetics, electric circuits and plants. In some lessons the teachers' questions do not encourage pupils to think for themselves enough, but where the pupils are given opportunities to show deeper understanding they do so. For example, in one lesson seen, a group of Year 9 pupils had prepared presentations on the work of Priestley and they were able to link this to work that they had covered on photosynthesis. The teacher had planned activities that gave them the opportunity to demonstrate a range of skills, including the use of presentation software to present their findings. This helped them to make progress in their learning. Generally, the lessons planned in Years 7 to 9 emphasise factual knowledge rather than the development of investigative skills. In some lessons, particularly double lessons with lower-attaining groups, this leads to a lack of variety and a pace that is too slow to make the most of the available time. In the most successful lessons there is a good variety of activities and the pupils are given opportunities to carry out practical work that engages their interest and encourages them to think more widely about science. They respond well in these lessons, working hard and co-operating effectively with each other. This well-planned teaching helps to ensure a positive response from the pupils, so that they make good progress in their learning.
79. The pupils in Years 10 and 11 also have generally good recall of previous work. In one lesson, for example, Year 10 pupils demonstrated a wide range of understanding on some key concepts in their study of electricity. Most pupils also have a sound knowledge of the difference between elements, mixtures and compounds, although their knowledge of chemical symbols and equations is less secure. Year 11 pupils show good understanding in their knowledge of chemical calculations and the higher-attaining pupils are able successfully to carry out quite demanding calculations on the quantities of chemicals involved in various reactions. They also demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of the work that they are doing on cell division and genetic manipulation. One Year 11 class had a very good knowledge of their work on genetic diseases and they were able sensibly to discuss moral issues related to genetic engineering. As with younger pupils, the standards seen in experimental and investigative science were lower than in the other attainment targets because the pupils had fewer opportunities to develop their skills in

this area. In a minority of lessons, the work planned is not sufficiently varied to involve and interest lower-attaining pupils and this can lead to some boredom and restlessness that hinder their learning; however, where the teachers plan a good variety of activities, the pupils respond well and show interest in the work. This enables them to make progress in their learning.

80. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, with some good and very good teaching. In a minority of lessons the teachers do not have a wide enough range of methods to ensure consistently good attitudes and learning. In nearly all lessons the learning objectives are made clear to the pupils so that they can understand what they need to learn in order to achieve good standards. The work in science develops the pupils' literacy and numeracy in appropriate ways. Pupils throughout the school have a good grasp of relevant scientific vocabulary and they have suitable mathematical skills to carry out their work. The use of ICT is not sufficiently developed in science and there is a particular need to improve the use of data-logging to support learning in experimental and investigative science.
81. There have been considerable changes in the staffing and organisation of the department since the last inspection and satisfactory improvement has been made. The department is well led by an enthusiastic head of department, who has made an impact in establishing a clear direction and positive ethos since his relatively recent appointment. The development plan identifies priorities that are focused on continuing improvement, and the principles of the Key Stage 3 strategy are beginning to be incorporated into teaching, although it is too early to assess their impact at this stage. Monitoring of teaching and learning has been established but there is a need to focus this more closely on ensuring that all lessons are sufficiently varied and interesting to motivate and engage the full range of pupils taught. The work of the science teachers is well supported by two full-time science technicians, who make a positive contribution to the smooth running of the department.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- Much teaching is very good, which leads to effective learning and very good progress in lessons.
- The pupils, in particular those in Years 10 and 11, have positive attitudes towards lessons which contribute to the positive and productive climate for learning.
- Leadership of the subject and the strength of the teaching team enable high standards to be maintained and indicate a very good capacity to improve them over time.
- The curriculum is rich, varied and balanced.
- Very good improvements have been made since the last inspection.

Areas for improvement

- The accommodation is in need of refurbishment and redesigning in order to improve the poor storage facilities and access between rooms.
- Resources for computer-aided work in the classrooms are unsatisfactory.
- The use of sketchbooks needs coherent development through the years, to ensure that literacy and research skills are developed within a creative format.

82. The proportion of pupils gaining grades A*-C in the 2002 GCSE examinations was significantly above the national average. Girls performed particularly well, with almost all gaining grades A*-C, the best performance in the school. This was a substantial rise over the previous year and a slight increase in their results in 2000. Boys' results show a steady rise in performance over the same period, to a point where they are now significantly above national averages and amongst the best in the school. The school now analyses results by gender and by ethnic groups and data indicates that the art department adds significant value to all pupils from Year 9 to the end of Year 11.

83. Standards of work seen at the end of Year 9 are broadly in line with national averages. Pupils arrive at the school having had a varied experience of art in their primary schools; some draw and colour very well, whilst others have had relatively little experience and need much support and guidance through the basic art skills. The department places an appropriate emphasis on observational drawing and on the acquisition of skills related to line, tone, colour, texture and form. The very good teaching and generally positive attitudes to lessons ensure that progress is good and often very good in Years 7 to 9, during which a very good foundation is laid for the examination course in Year 10. Pupils are generally positive about art lessons, although in some classes in Years 7 to 9 there are a few pupils, mostly boys, who behave in a silly, immature way and take up more teaching time than they should. Pupils in Year 7 respond well to questions and build up a good knowledge base of masks and their use. They learn that masks are a feature of almost every society, including modern Western societies, and are used for many rituals and working practices. Pupils in Year 8 learn the techniques of slab clay modelling and building well-formed figures with amusing and interesting added features. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 9 draw the human figure freely and confidently, learning quickly from the very well-planned exercises in observational drawing. Lower-attaining pupils lack confidence and do not have well-developed observational skills. They tend to overwork continuous line drawings without looking carefully at the subject. Pupils whose first language is not English and those with special educational needs make the same very good progress as others in their drawing. They are known well by the teachers and there are no intellectual or creative barriers to their learning. In a well-planned and well-taught lesson on digital animation, using the school's computer suite, the pupils made very good progress in managing the software programme, with higher-attaining pupils going well beyond the lesson targets to create amusing and complex animation sequences.
84. Standards are above national averages in Years 10 and 11. Pupils are very positive in their attitudes, are well motivated towards the GCSE examination and they benefit from the very good teaching. Teaching in Years 10 and 11 is confident, well informed and classes are very well managed. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are mature, reflective and confident in talking to others about their work. All Year 10 pupils show well-developed drawing skills in observing the human skeleton, exploring a range of drawing tools to convey texture, tone and form in their drawings. Pupils in Year 11 study the work of a wide range of artists and use their knowledge and skills to combine unusual images from widely differing sources: Surrealism and Impressionism, World War One photographs and Expressionism or the sculpture of Henry Moore; Indian motifs and the work of William Morris. The high expectations that teachers have, lead to a high standard of work at this stage. Standards of portrait drawing are particularly high. Some digital imaging from photographs is evident, although this is mainly completed on home computers, the department's computer resources being limited. Many individual sketchbooks are presented to a good standard, but their use does not fully support the school's promotion of literacy and research skills.
85. The quality of teaching is very good in all years. Teachers are enthusiastic and committed, using their own very good knowledge and skills to raise the standard of work of all pupils. Whilst the introductions to lessons generally comprise brisk question and answer sessions to check learning and focus on lesson targets, opportunities to develop the critical thinking skills of pupils are sometimes missed in the rush to complete and clear up after the lesson. This is particularly noticeable in lessons in Years 7 to 9. Although there were examples of well-planned and presented sketchbooks, in particular in Years 10 and 11, they are not used to fully support the school's literacy targets through annotation and the recording of investigation into media, techniques and the work of important artists.
86. The head of department is relatively new to the post, but is an experienced and well-qualified teacher who leads the strong, enthusiastic teaching team very effectively. She manages and monitors the work of the department very well, making good use of monitoring data to raise standards. The art technician gives valued support each morning. The very good and well-taught curriculum maintains the interest and enthusiasm of pupils and enables the department to hold a position amongst the most successful departments in the school. The use of local professional artists is making a significant impact on the work and career planning of pupils. Accommodation for the subject is barely satisfactory, with poor storage facilities and rooms in need of refurbishment and some redesigning. Resources are satisfactory, with a very good range of books

in the library and art rooms, but with poorly organised observational resources and inadequate computer hardware and software.

87. The subject has made a very good improvement since the previous inspection. The curriculum has improved significantly, standards of teaching and learning have improved and observational work has made a very significant improvement.

CITIZENSHIP

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

Strengths

- The initial planning for the subject is good.
- The contribution of other subjects to citizenship is valuable.
- Outside speakers make a valuable contribution.
- The subject contributes well to the pupils' social and moral development.

Areas for improvement

- Schemes of work need completing to include the contribution of other areas and to extend the provision to all year groups.
- An assessment system should be developed and a system of monitoring to ensure that all pupils have equal opportunities to participate in citizenship activities.
- A subject base is needed to raise the profile of the subject.

88. As citizenship was formally introduced in September 2002 there is as yet no basis for national comparison of standards. The subject is still in the process of establishing itself in its own right. It is taught as part of the social education course in Years 7, 8 and 11, and in the short time since the subject was introduced some pupils have undertaken a self-assessment of units of work covered. These and work seen show that the standards attained are in line with expectations and that the pupils are making satisfactory progress. There is no difference in the performance of different groups of pupils or between boys and girls.
89. In Year 7 the subject is taught by form tutors and the work is variable. Work during the inspection was not officially citizenship but it showed how other aspects of the course could contribute. One class was considering health and fitness with community provision. The lesson did not ensure that all pupils were actively involved but there was a good level of discussion within the groups. In Year 8 a team of volunteer staff are teaching the subject. The drugs unit supported by a visit from the police showed how the social education and citizenship work overlaps, giving the pupils a good understanding of the legal position with regard to this topic.
90. Citizenship is taught in Year 11 for two lessons a week as part of a social education course. It also covers a number of areas of citizenship as seen in a lesson where the pupils were considering how a local authority planning issue could affect the environment and them as individuals. A good range of methods is used to stimulate interest. The large number who suggested their action would be to boycott the facilities rather than change the provision showed the early stage of development in the pupils' understanding.
91. The teaching and learning of citizenship is satisfactory, there being no significant difference in quality in Years 7 and 8 or 11. Provision is supplemented by the good teaching in other subjects and at other times. Examples seen during the inspection included the form time of a Year 9 class discussing decision made by the school council, Year 10 studying the rise of the Nazi party considering how a country should be run and the wide range of political issues encountered in English, drama and media texts. These examples have not yet been formalized into the schemes of work. The attitudes to social education and citizenship are mixed. This affects learning, but when the pupils are engaged in the subject good learning takes place. Citizenship does not have a subject base or even one identifiable teaching room, making accommodation poor. The impact of this is that the resources have to be carried to all areas of the school and there is no display of subject-related work in the teaching rooms, adversely affecting teaching and learning.
92. Planning in the school has been satisfactory and the provision is moving towards meeting the national requirements for citizenship. The first two strands of gaining knowledge and understanding, and developing the skills of enquiry and communication are being taught in Years 7, 8 and 11 through units of work in the personal social and health education course. Other subjects are contributing to the provision but these areas are not yet incorporated into the scheme

of work. Ideas for the third strand of participation and responsibility are still in the planning stage and the monitoring is not yet in place to ensure that all pupils have equal opportunities for participation. A subject handbook is being produced, as aspects of the course are trialled in the first year. Thus there is currently no formal provision for the literacy, numeracy and ICT aspects of the course; the assessment structure for the subject is also still under consideration. So far there has been no whole-school training to support the teaching of citizenship.

93. The subject is satisfactorily led and managed. The head of department provides leadership with a clear vision of what is required to establish citizenship within the curriculum. The structure for the monitoring of the subject and teaching is not yet in place. As this was not a subject in the last report no comparison can be made. The present level of provision represents a satisfactory start for the subject and a good capacity to succeed further.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- A broad range of subjects provides an appropriate curriculum.
- Teaching is generally good.

Areas for improvement

- The accommodation needs complete reorganisation.
- Teachers need to ensure that all pupils understand the relevance of the presented topic.
- The school needs to ensure that best teaching practice is disseminated across the whole department.

94. GCSE results have been above the national average overall for the last three years; however, the results are lower than the average of the results for other subjects taken by the pupils. The girls generally gain much better results than the boys. The best results have been gained in textiles, especially in 2001 and 2002. Results in food technology and graphics products were near average in 2002 but lower than in 2001. Results in resistant materials were above the national average in 2001 and 2002 and were in line with results for other subjects in the school.

95. The pupils' experiences of design and technology before arriving at Orleans Park have been variable; nevertheless, standards in the current Year 7 are generally above average. Pupils take care with their work and are keen to learn. In Year 8 pupils work well when the task is challenging. Design work and manufactured items seen show insufficient attention to detail and presentation. In Year 9 more mature pupils are able to produce some very good work, and overall standards are in line with the national average for both designing and making. Pupils with special educational needs are integrated into the classes and get help from their peers or from a classroom assistant when the need is great. Similarly, those with English as a second language are helped by their peers and learn rapidly. As noted at the time of the last inspection, gifted and talented pupils need more challenge in Years 8 and 9 to maintain their concentration, especially during the double periods. Literacy is developed satisfactorily by specific tasks focusing on key words needed for the subject. Numeracy is used for quantities in food technology and for measurement in the other subject areas. ICT could be used more frequently in Years 7 to 9 if arrangements in the department gave better access.

96. Standards rise during Year 10 and particularly Year 11 so that attainment is above average overall as the pupils prepare coursework for the examination. ICT is used effectively by many pupils in resistant materials and in graphics to create designs and improve presentation. Many pupils use home computing facilities. A class of girls studying textiles is achieving high standards as individuals prepare their designs.

97. Teaching is generally good in all years. The teachers have knowledge and experience in a main subject and are also able to contribute effectively in other subject areas. Pupils acquire knowledge rapidly during Year 7 and make appropriate progress; however, during Years 8 and 9 there is slower progress and achievement in some classes. Lesson plans are carefully considered but sometimes need to include a wider variety of different activities to maintain pace throughout the lesson. Examples of good quality finished products could be shown more frequently. With some classes teacher expectations could be higher so that pupils are constantly challenged. Motivation was high when the pupils were asked to build a tower from cardboard strips and they knew that the results were to be judged at the end of the lesson. Most pupils made a considerable creative effort with this task and enjoyed the work. Where tasks are assessed at the end of a lesson, pupils gain useful knowledge of their progress. More regular grading of work and brief knowledge tests would help motivation. The social effects of waste disposal and the effects of technology are frequently discussed. Homework is regularly set but not always completed. The observed learning varied from satisfactory to very good. Achievement increases noticeably in Year 11 as pupils appreciate the importance of the examination. Attitudes and behaviour are generally good. Pupils show respect for their teachers and are willing to learn when the topic is clearly appropriate and presents new challenges.
98. The curriculum provides a broad range of experiences through the subjects of graphics, resistant materials, textiles and food technology. Electronics and structures are also studied but the teaching of computer-aided design and manufacturing needs to be strengthened in order to ensure that the requirements of the National Curriculum are met. Pupils use wood, cardboard, textiles and food regularly but the use of metals and the shaping of plastics could be further developed. Year 10 pupils whose interests lie in making items rather than the full design process can choose a GCSE industrial technology course. This also includes the use of machines and computers. Similarly other pupils can study for a food certificate. This is successful and likely to gain some distinctions for both boys and girls. Some pupils are involved in a 'Techno-games' project.
99. Management is satisfactory. The head of department now has a team of teachers with considerable expertise. Appraisal has taken place but further development could be achieved if the expertise in assessment and teaching methods could be disseminated across the whole department. The accommodation has inadequate teaching and storage facilities and is widely separated, making co-ordination very difficult. Complete refurbishment is necessary to improve teaching areas and subject ethos. Learning resources are satisfactory, although additional computer-aided design and computer-aided manufacturing equipment is needed. Some older items of equipment need replacement.
100. Overall, satisfactory improvement has been achieved in design and technology since the last inspection, although there has been no improvement to the accommodation. The pupils' achievements are also broadly similar to those reported at the time of the last inspection.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- Assessment of the pupils' progress is good.
- The teaching of literacy is an important aspect of the subject.
- The department is well managed.

Areas for improvement

- ICT facilities are inadequate.
- More opportunities for pupils to think for themselves are needed.

101. GCSE results for 2002 were above the national average, with more girls achieving the A* grade, but boys doing better overall in the A*-C band. Pupils entered for geography in 2002 achieved similar

results to the average for all their other subjects. Results have been above average for the previous three years but with no overall improvement. The department also runs a travel and tourism vocational course but this has not been in place long enough for examination results to be available.

102. Standards are above national expectations by the end of Year 9 and have improved over the last three years. By the end of Year 9 pupils have a good knowledge of geographical processes such as the creation of landscapes through weathering and erosion, and the causes of rainfall. Most pupils can read maps and use atlases effectively to locate places both locally and worldwide. Pupils' work in Years 7 to 9 shows a steady progression of learning of skills and knowledge because of the well-planned teaching and good management of classes that ensure everyone has the opportunity to learn well. This picture represents satisfactory progress from pupils' entry to the school; however, the weak literacy skills of lower-attaining pupils prevent them from expressing their geographical learning well.
103. Standards at the end of Year 11 are above average overall. Knowledgeable teaching, with varied and interesting resources is leading to pupil attitudes that are almost always very positive, and the pupils achieve well in Years 10 and 11. During the week of the inspection teachers were leading Year 11 pupils in revision for a forthcoming mock GCSE examination. Well-planned lessons concentrated not only on refreshing past learning about such topics as changes in human population and the development of settlements, but also on sharpening examination techniques and the pupils' will to do well. An impressively high standard of coursework has been produced featuring first-hand studies comparing three local shopping centres. Year 10 pupils were engaged in a study of the topic of global warming, using mathematical skills to draw conclusions about the correlation between the increase in pollution and the rise of global temperature.
104. In all year groups the progress of pupils with special educational needs is in line with that of their classmates because they are well supported by additional help from teachers and classroom assistants and, where necessary, by work that is adapted to suit their needs. The highest-attaining pupils also progress well because they are provided with extended exercises in many lessons. Pupils with English as an additional language are well integrated into the classes and their progress was seen to be very good.
105. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall across all year groups, with no unsatisfactory teaching and some very good lessons. Opportunities to read, speak and write are built into all lessons and well used. Where there is a comparative weakness it lies in a tendency to tell pupils information rather than give them the opportunity to develop thinking skills by discovering it for themselves. Most pupils have very good attitudes to their work, but inattentive behaviour by a few pupils interrupts some lessons. This is always quickly and effectively dealt with by teachers. Assessment of pupils' progress is a strength of the department, both in day-to-day marking and in the regular assessed pieces of work that pupils complete. All pupils have the opportunity to assess their own work and set their own targets for improvement, so that all know how well they are doing.
106. Although pupils wordprocess their coursework, and ICT exercises are built into the schemes of work, access to facilities for class use is limited and therefore there is not yet enough use of ICT as an integral part of learning.
107. The subject is very well led by the head of department who works with a team of enthusiastic subject specialists. Improvement since the last inspection has been good, with a better standard of teaching and learning. Learning objectives are shared with pupils and progress is more effectively monitored through the use of assessment data. Considerable work has gone into improving resources and subject documentation and there is good capacity to develop the provision for geography still further.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- There is much very good teaching.
- GCSE results are well above average.
- The pupils' progress is assessed well.

Areas for improvement

- More facilities for the use of ICT in teaching and learning are required.

108. GCSE results for 2002 were well above average with a large proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels. Pupils entered for history in 2002 did better in this subject than in the average of all their other subjects, though not significantly so. Over the past three years results in the A*-C band have improved steadily and a high overall pass rate has been maintained. Although girls' results are better than those of boys, the gap between the two is less than the gap nationally.
109. Standards by the end of Year 9 are above national expectations, with girls doing better than boys at the higher levels. This represents good progress from attainment on entry to the school. The pupils' work throughout Years 7 to 9 is above average, with a steady development of historical skills and knowledge as a result of the well-planned, knowledgeable and enthusiastic teaching that ensures a positive learning environment where everyone has the opportunity to do their best. For example, pupils in Year 8 showed an unusually well-informed understanding of the social problems in Britain that might have led to revolution in the nineteenth century because the teacher provided a series of well-focused tasks and constantly checked learning by questioning at intervals during the lesson. Some of the work of the lower-attaining pupils is restricted by weak writing skills which slows their output but not necessarily their understanding.
110. Standards at the end of Year 11 are well above average. With very good teaching and attitudes that are almost always very positive, pupils achieve well in Years 10 and 11. During the week of the inspection teachers were leading Year 11 pupils in revision for a forthcoming mock GCSE examination. The well organised and very interesting lessons concentrated on reinforcing past learning about such topics as the fall of the Weimar Republic and the rise to power of Adolf Hitler, about which the pupils clearly already have an impressive depth of knowledge. A very high standard of coursework has been produced showing the ability to analyse sources and argue opinions about the conduct of World War 1. The best of these pieces were very sophisticated. Year 10 pupils were studying the German reaction to the Treaty of Versailles, learning by working together in pairs to discuss and write about the differences between the expectations of the German people and what they were actually offered.
111. Pupils with special educational needs were seen to make good and very good progress, in line with their classmates, because of the good provision of work appropriate to their needs and the additional help that they were given. Higher-attaining pupils made appropriate progress because extension work was usually provided for them. No pupils were seen whose level of English as an additional language restricted their work.
112. Teaching and learning are very good in all year groups. No lessons were unsatisfactory and one was excellent, developing the pupils' learning about the Weimar Republic by requiring them to write and deliver speeches as though they were candidates for election as president. This method also led to a strong element of citizenship education. Teachers' high expectations lead to a high standard of work and their enthusiasm stimulates the pupils' obvious enjoyment of and interest in the subject.
113. Very good leadership and management guide a committed group of teachers and have led to good improvement since the previous inspection. Lesson aims are now made clear to pupils, and key words defined and discussed. A very good assessment system is in place enabling teachers to

track the progress of all pupils, and for the pupils to be aware of their own learning. Although ICT is written into the schemes of work, there is not enough access to facilities for it to be used as an integral part of the curriculum at present; however, an interesting history web site has been set up as an additional resource for learning. The capacity for future development of the department is strong.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- The introduction of ICT lessons for all pupils in Years 7 to 9 is having a significant impact on raising standards.
- Teaching in discrete ICT courses is good.

Areas for improvement

- Standards in Years 10 and 11 are unsatisfactory.
- Greater use of ICT is needed by teachers in subjects, and a system to monitor this use should be developed.
- National Curriculum requirements for ICT are not met.
- The school should develop procedures to assess the ICT capability of all pupils in Years 10 and 11.
- The teachers' control of Internet access during some ICT lessons is unsatisfactory.
- There is insufficient technical support for ICT and for network management to ensure that all hardware and software is functioning properly.

114. A small number of pupils were entered for the short GCSE course in ICT for the first time in 2002. The course was covered in one year with inadequate teaching time, and examination results were below the national and school average.

115. Inspection evidence indicates that the pupils in Years 7 and 8 are producing work which is at least consistent with, and sometimes better than, national expectations. Discrete ICT lessons were introduced for Year 7 last year and they have continued into Year 8. This provision, based upon the national strategy for ICT, has enabled these pupils to make good progress in developing their ICT skills and knowledge in wordprocessing and the use of presentation software, as well as handling information with spreadsheets and databases. In a very good Year 7 lesson, for example, the pupils responded well to the enthusiasm of the teacher and made very good gains in their ability to use a range of spreadsheet functions. An interactive white-board was used to good effect to help the pupils to improve their use of number as well as to develop ICT skills. Pupils in Year 9 have timetabled ICT lessons for the first time this year and are making good progress but their attainment is below the expected standard. In one Year 9 lesson some less able pupils were still having problems in navigating their way around the computer network in order to find and save files.

116. In Years 10 and 11 more than one-third of each year group now follows a full GCSE course in ICT and a small group is following a CLAIT skills course. Because these pupils did not have ICT lessons in earlier years and had limited opportunities to use ICT in other subjects, the majority are starting from a low level of ICT skills and knowledge and overall attainment is below expectations. Work seen during the inspection provides evidence that many of these pupils are now making at least satisfactory and sometimes good progress in relation to previous experience. There are small numbers of high-attaining pupils in some examination groups who are producing coursework of a high standard. In a Year 11 GCSE lesson, a small number of pupils were allowed access to more advanced software to enable them to make impressive use of a range of interactive animation effects for web pages which they were creating for a piece of coursework. Pupils are experiencing the range of software applications, which is required for the examination course. Coursework includes examples of desktop publishing, databases and spreadsheets, the construction of web pages and the use of presentation software. The use of ICT to measure, record and respond to events needs to be included in programmes of study at both key stages if pupils are to receive

their full National Curriculum ICT entitlement. There is no significant difference between the performance of girls and boys in all years.

117. The pupils' attitudes and behaviour in ICT lessons are generally good. The majority are keen to learn and to demonstrate the skills that they are learning; however, in some lessons a minority of pupils do not maintain appropriate levels of concentration without frequent reminders. A good deal of Internet use was included in lesson plans but in some Year 9,10 and 11 lessons, pupils frequently wasted time on unauthorised use when they should have been focused on other tasks.
118. Teaching and learning seen in ICT lessons ranged from satisfactory to excellent and were good overall. The best lessons were tightly structured with clear targets and differentiated tasks to suit the whole ability range, allowing good progress to be made. In these lessons pupils were moved away from computers for whole class teaching or monitors were turned off; progress was reviewed during the lesson and an appropriate review session was held towards the end. Some particularly good use was regularly made of an interactive whiteboard in one ICT room. The start to some lessons lacked sufficient focus and there was inadequate action to ensure that all pupils were appropriately engaged throughout, particularly when the Internet was included in the lesson plan. Some long-term computer network problems have had an adverse impact on teachers' ability to conduct whole class sessions in one of the ICT rooms. Assessment of work is regular and thorough, printed items are marked appropriately and contain diagnostic comments; this applies particularly to examination coursework. Support for individuals, including those with special educational needs, during practical sessions was usually good and often very good.
119. Some aspects of the overall management of ICT need to be improved. In all years opportunities to use and develop ICT skills outside timetabled ICT lessons are limited. The use of ICT in other subjects is not well developed. The curriculum has not been appropriately mapped to support the systematic planning of ICT experiences for all pupils. This is a particular concern in Years 10 and 11 for those pupils who do not take the GCSE ICT course. The level of resources also restricts the use of ICT in subjects. Although there has been an increase in the number of computers in recent years, the total is below average for a school of this size and there are limited opportunities for subject departments to have regular access to computer suites for class use. Some departments have small clusters of machines; some of these are well used but other departments need to be more creative in using ICT to enhance teaching and learning. The learning resource centre is well equipped with computers which are well used by the English department. The part-time technical support which is available for the increasing level of resources, is now inadequate to ensure continued effective operation and management of the curriculum computer network takes up too much of the time of teaching staff during the day, distracting attention from curriculum issues.
120. Overall, there has been satisfactory improvement in ICT provision since the last inspection particularly in relation to the provision of discrete ICT lessons and the level of resources but there are still several significant areas where further improvement is needed.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

Strengths

- There is much good teaching.
- The pupils reach high standards in public examinations.
- The department caters well for the particular learning needs of boys.
- Teachers plan lessons carefully and use the foreign language most of the time.
- Assessment procedures are good and pupils are developing their awareness of the standards they have achieved and what they need to do to improve.

Areas for improvement

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teachers need to encourage pupils to be more independent and creative in their learning.• Improve teaching by sharing lesson objectives with pupils. |
|---|

French and German

121. The pupils entered for GCSE in both French and German in 2002 achieved better results in these subjects than they did in the average in all their other subjects. Results in both subjects were above the national average. Boys achieved particularly good results in French, exceeding the national average by a margin of more than 25%.
122. Teaching is good in Years 7 to 9. Lessons are well planned and the teachers' expectations are high. The most able pupils make good progress and reach standards which are well above average. The progress made by other pupils is satisfactory, and standards achieved overall at the end of Year 9 are above the national average. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress and those who speak another language in addition to English make good progress. The pupils benefit from the fact that most teachers use the language they teach for the purposes of practical communication for the majority of the time in most lessons. In one French lesson in Year 7, the pupils were particularly motivated when their teacher required them to respond to questions according to the format of a popular television quiz and, in a German lesson in Year 8, the pupils responded well to their teacher's rapid delivery and to the challenge of closing their books while they put questions to each other. Whilst pupils sometimes take the initiative in this way, opportunities for pupils to use language creatively are not common and few pupils become truly independent in their learning. It is rare for teachers to discuss with pupils the learning objectives of a lesson. Attitudes towards the subject are mixed and, whilst there is occasional misbehaviour, they are satisfactory overall.
123. Teaching is good in Years 10 and 11. In the best lessons, pupils are encouraged to take the initiative and are given appropriate learning activities. For example, in a German lesson pupils created a list of questions on the board with only a minimum of support from their teacher and then took part in a series of authentic conversations prompted by a well-designed stimulus; however, practice of the speaking skill is not a feature of all lessons; many pupils are reluctant to speak in the foreign language, especially with each other in small groups, and teachers do not encourage them to do so consistently enough. Standards vary considerably, with the most able pupils doing particularly well at the end of Year 11. Pupils with special educational needs and those who find language learning challenging are often taught in smaller groups and this support enables them to make satisfactory progress. All pupils are assessed at regular intervals and teachers make them aware of what they need to do to improve. Overall, pupils of this age make good progress and standards are above average.
124. Basic skills are well taught within the languages curriculum. Grammatical knowledge is taught effectively and many pupils, especially the more able, acquire enough knowledge to improve their literacy skills and manipulate language effectively. For example, one lesson started with an exercise in which pupils had to place words from German sentences in the correct order by moving them around physically on their desks. They were written in the past tense and, by accomplishing the task, the pupils demonstrated their understanding of word-order rules. Exercises to practise numeracy by carrying out calculations, presenting statistical information and playing games with numbers in the foreign language are a regular feature of the department's work. Many opportunities exist for pupils to become more proficient at using ICT, which is firmly embedded in the languages curriculum. Examples include a class which researched the appearance and hobbies of a famous French sports personality by exploring three web sites. Another class used a popular structured text programme to perform different exercises, based on an account of a recent holiday. All classes use the computers regularly in their French and German lessons.
125. The leadership and management of the modern languages department are good. The head of department gives clear direction for language teaching in the school and the departmental handbook provides a well constructed and comprehensive basis for current and future

developments. The values and aims of the whole school are reflected in the work of the department and there is a strong commitment to equal opportunity. Procedures for the assessment and tracking of pupils are good. Staffing is good and the contribution of the foreign language assistants is valuable. Monitoring of teaching is developing but the good practice, which exists within the department, is not consistently shared; however, there is a commitment to improvement on the part of teachers within the department and the capacity to succeed. Accommodation and resources are good. The library is well stocked with reference books and study guides. Although it contains no books or magazines for pupils to read for pleasure, these are available in good supply in the department library. The priorities identified for the current development plan are appropriate and have the potential to continue to improve performance in the subject. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- GCSE results are good.
- The determination of the department managers to raise standards is evident in all of its work.
- The instrumental teaching is good or better.
- Extra-curricular activities have been reinstated.

Areas for improvement

- Standards are not high enough in Years 7 to 9.
- Accommodation and resources are unsatisfactory.
- The length of lessons and allocation of time to music is inadequate.

126. In the 2002 GCSE examinations the percentage of pupils obtaining A*-C grades was well above both the school and the national averages.
127. Inspection evidence shows that standards at the end of Year 9 (end of Key Stage 3) are below expectations. This is due to the lack of experience that the pupils have of working with ICT, the reduced length of lesson time impeding the full delivery of the National Curriculum, and the frequent changes of teacher over the last two years. The standard of accommodation and shortage of resources are also having an adverse effect on teaching and learning. Pupils arrive in Year 7 with a variety of musical experiences but are prevented from reaching the standard expected at the end of Year 9 for the reasons stated above, despite the efforts of teaching staff.
128. Standards are below average in Year 10 but above average in Year 11. A significant number of pupils in Year 10 still have to realise the need for personal commitment when studying a subject at GCSE and not waste valuable lesson time by distracting their colleagues. In contrast, pupils in Year 11 work well at their studies and with a small number of exceptions are up-to-date with their coursework and take their studies seriously.
129. Attitudes and behaviour in music lessons vary depending on the amount of challenge, pace and the effectiveness of class management. In some of the lessons in Years 7 to 9 the pupils' attitudes are good or better, but in others they are unsatisfactory or worse. Where tasks are clearly and concisely explained, pupils are enabled to engage themselves in enjoyable musical activities. They settle down quickly and produce worthwhile results. Long explanations interrupted by disaffected pupils sometimes result in no time being available for any practical work.
130. Teaching overall is satisfactory. Some improvement in the standard of teaching was observed during the course of the inspection. Teaching in Years 10 to 11 is good. In the very good lessons the teacher's knowledge of how learning takes place is evident and consequently lessons are planned to enable the pupils to discover learning for themselves. These lessons cater well for the needs of all pupils and there is an appropriate sense of pace. Pupils with special educational

needs are taught in the same classes as the remainder of their forms and make satisfactory progress. This is due to the practical nature of the lessons which often by-passes their individual educational difficulties. The teachers' expectations are appropriately high and pupils leave the lessons with a sense of achievement. Unfortunately the short length of lessons does not allow for as many performances of group work and subsequent evaluation as the teacher would wish. Consequently pupils are denied valuable learning experiences. Homework was only set for pupils in Year 11 during the inspection. The department needs to review its philosophy on the importance of the use of appropriate written work to further the pupils' learning. The written work analysed during the inspection was small in quantity low in quality, and often copied down in class.

131. Since the last inspection standards in Years 7 to 9 have fallen, and the number of extra-curricular activities available has decreased. Furthermore, the a majority of the issues raised in the last report have not been tackled. The department is at present being satisfactorily managed by two teachers who are determined to bring the status of the department back to a respectable level. The present curriculum is being revised and a new assessment policy introduced to enable the teachers to monitor the pupils' progress more efficiently and raise standards through the introduction of pupils' self-evaluation and individual target-setting. The results of assessment will also be used to influence further curriculum evaluation. No monitoring and formal evaluation of teaching has taken place since the beginning of the academic year.
132. The department managers are also trying to reinstate the extra-curricular activities, but with one of the teachers only working for two days, and the extra classes run for the GCSE candidates which also take place at lunchtime, the amount of rehearsal time is severely limited. The teachers also would like to reinstate the annual musical production. Seventy pupils receive lessons from nine instrumental teachers from Richmond Music Trust in which good or better teaching and learning takes place. Further involvement of these teachers in directing extra-curricular ensembles would enable a larger number of activities to be offered.
133. Much is being achieved in inadequate accommodation and with insufficient resources, but improvement in these aspects since the last inspection is unsatisfactory. The last report highlighted accommodation and resources as having an adverse effect on teaching and learning. Apart from the addition of a presently non-functional computer room nothing has been done to tackle the issue; however, class sizes in Years 7 to 9 have increased over the period. Of the two classrooms, the smaller is poorly ventilated and does not comfortably accommodate the numbers in the class. The basic décor is shabby and relies on the displays of pupils' work and curriculum posters to reduce its lack of appeal. There are insufficient practice rooms for group work, especially when two Year 7 to 9 classes are being taught at the same time. There are insufficient resources to enable the department to deliver the National Curriculum fully, causing the present curriculum to be designed around resource availability rather than the needs of the pupils. A suite of 10 computers is being established but there have been problems loading the specialist software. This has impeded progress with ICT in music.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Teaching and learning are very good; the teachers plan lessons with a range of activities that allow all groups of pupils to learn well.
- Standards of performance, including GCSE examination results, are good.
- Staff are very committed and enthusiastic about the subject.
- The good relationships between teachers and pupils and the positive attitudes of pupils to their work result in good standards.
- The very good extra-curricular programme provides opportunities for all pupils to extend their learning.

Areas for improvement

- The teaching time in Year 8 and Year 9 should be increased.
- Assessment data should be used to set the pupils targets and to track their progress.
- Curricular links with partner primary schools should be strengthened.
- The inadequate changing room accommodation needs to be extended.

134. The GCSE examination has been introduced since the last inspection. In the 2002 sports studies GCSE examination, the proportion of pupils gaining grades A*-C was above the national average. Results in the 2001 examination were in line with the national average. The pass rate and percentage of pupils achieving A* and A grades, are consistently above average. Pupils generally achieve better results in sports studies than in most of their other subjects. High-attaining and talented pupils achieve very well in a wide range of sports at borough, county and sometimes national levels. Individuals and teams perform particularly well in rugby and athletics.
135. Standards in lessons and the work of Year 9 pupils are above national expectations and show good improvement from work in Year 7; most pupils are achieving well. They understand basic fitness principles, make effective use of individual and team skills in games and show good balance and fluency in gymnastics. Teaching is very good in Years 7 to 9. The teachers' very good knowledge and understanding of the subject help pupils to make considerable gains in their understanding of technique, tactics and fitness. The teachers plan carefully for progress and challenge. In a Year 8 dance lesson, pupils of different attainment improved well because the teacher planned work that was appropriate for all levels. Lower-attainers and a disabled pupil made progress beyond expectations because of the teacher's use of demonstrations, modified tasks and the good support of a learning assistant. The standards of a small minority are below average. Their levels of skill, hand-eye co-ordination, body management in the aesthetic aspects and spatial awareness restrict progress. Higher-attainers use well-refined skills and tactics consistently to out-manoeuvre opponents; their learning is accelerated by extension tasks in lessons and through extra-curricular activities. Learning was not as good in a small proportion of lessons when teaching became more prescriptive and pupils were given fewer opportunities to explore their own ideas.
136. Standards in lessons and the work of Year 11 pupils are above national expectations. A significant minority of Year 11 pupils are participating in GCSE sports studies; they are on target to achieve results above the national average. Teaching is very good and the pupils achieve well in Years 10 and 11. Learning is very good because of the pupils' positive attitudes to their work and the high standard of teaching. The pupils listen to instructions, communicate well in group work and confidently try new skills; good relationships are a feature in lessons. Teachers have high expectations, very good subject knowledge and planning and management skills. This was very evident in a Year 10 football lesson, where the teacher provided good opportunities for pupils to plan their own tactics, evaluate performance and officiate. A high percentage of pupils perform well in these tasks. They understand the components of fitness, have good knowledge of training principles and apply their understanding of attacking and defensive tactics effectively in games. Higher-attaining and talented pupils make very good progress; their learning is accelerated by extension tasks, grouping and extra-curricular sport. They use their well-developed ICT skills to analyse and summarise data; they have a detailed understanding of the physiological effects of exercise on the body and perform to a high standard in the practical elements. The few lower-attaining pupils lack spatial and tactical awareness. They are less adept in applying theoretical concepts to practical situations, for example knowledge of training principles in fitness work. No significant differences were observed in the standards achieved by boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
137. Most pupils show good use of literacy and numeracy. They are given opportunities to measure and record performance, plot heart rate graphs and use scoring systems. Teachers emphasise key words and are adept in their use of questioning. These methods improve the technical vocabulary, speaking skills and ability to listen of pupils across the attainment levels. GCSE pupils develop their extended writing skills through assignments such as 'drugs in sport'. The department lacks computing resources, but strongly encourages GCSE pupils to use school and

personal computers, including the Internet, for research and to improve presentation. Most do so well. There are few opportunities for pupils in Years 7 to 9 to develop their ICT skills.

138. Leadership and management are good. The head of department has a strong commitment to improvement and success and is ably supported by a dedicated team of specialists. Good procedures are in place to monitor, evaluate and improve standards. The pupils' learning is enhanced by the provision of good quality indoor and outdoor facilities, including a new all-weather pitch. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
139. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. The GCSE examination in sports studies has been successfully introduced and results are above the national average. The quality of teaching and learning has improved to very good. Standards at the end of Year 9 and Year 11 are now above average. Awareness of safety and of the requirements of pupils with special educational needs is now a feature in lessons. In order to improve further, the department needs to make better use of assessment data for both target-setting and the tracking of pupils' progress; extend changing room space and develop curricular links with partner primary schools. There is a need to increase both the numbers of girls undertaking the GCSE examination and the teaching time in Years 8 and 9.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in religious education is **good**.

Strengths

- The good achievement of pupils in Years 7 to 9, especially in learning from religion, giving their own views and discussing issues.
- There are elements of good and excellent teaching that enable good learning to take place.
- Leadership and management of the department are both good.
- The GCSE short course has recently been introduced.

Areas for improvement

- More constructive comments on work need to be made with greater consistency in order to help pupils raise their attainment levels even further.
- An assessment scheme needs to be developed that meets the agreed syllabus requirements.
- Artefacts should be provided and ICT developed to supplement the teaching and aid the learning of the pupils.
- The revised schemes of work needs to be completed to ensure full coverage of the world religions required in Years 7 to 9.

140. The school has just started a GCSE short course in religious education and so there are no examination results.
141. Pupils join the school with knowledge, skills and understanding that are below the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. This is shown by the baseline assessments made on entry to the school. Pupils come from several primary schools, which do not follow the same agreed syllabus. A recent change in the agreed syllabus has also resulted in varying changeover programmes, so the pupils' knowledge base and skills are variable. .
142. The work of pupils currently in Year 9 shows that they are at the level expected by the agreed syllabus. Good teaching encourages pupils to use the correct vocabulary. Pupils are always expected to give a reason for their answer, apply their knowledge and are able to give examples to show their understanding of issues. This was seen in a Year 9 class studying the environment that considered the impact of direct and indirect action and how people may opt out of their responsibilities. The good planning, knowledge and understanding of the staff is used to stimulate and maintain interest in the lessons by devising a variety of ways of approaching the topics. In the

best lessons support materials are available for pupils with weaker literacy. Pupils in Year 9 have a weaker understanding of world religions but the evidence from the inspection shows that the current Years 7 and 8 have a more secure understanding and are in line to exceed the expectations of the agreed syllabus by the end of Year 9. In a Year 7 lesson excellent challenge enabled all the pupils to develop their independent learning skills and oral presentation skills. As pupils move from below expectations on entry to the school to being in line with the agreed syllabus expectations at the end of Year 9, they make good progress.

143. The pupils in Year 11 cover some religious aspects of topics in the social education course when comparing religious ideas and moral issues. Year 10 is the first group of pupils to study the short GCSE course in religious education and the current standards being reached are below the syllabus expectations. This group covered fewer of the topics in earlier years and are achieving at a satisfactory level. The teaching in Year 10 is covered by a team of staff who are still coming to terms with the new course and teaching is satisfactory. Starter activities stimulate interest and involve pupils in the topics as seen when considering the concept of a just war, but at times the lessons inhibit learning by being too teacher-dominated with the teacher filling in answers rather than developing a questioning technique to draw the answers from the pupils. The written work submitted by the pupils in Year 10 showed a variation in the depth of work being covered.
144. Overall the teaching and learning of religious education are good. Teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 are good with some excellent aspects. Teaching and learning in Years 10 and 11 are satisfactory. In all years the marking of the pupils' books gives positive encouragement but the use of constructive comments so that pupils know what to do to raise their attainment level is inconsistent. Good teacher-pupil relationships ensure that the pupils feel confident in expressing personal views. The unsatisfactory accommodation influences teaching and learning in all years in that resources are difficult to share and there is a lack of subject-based display work in the rooms being used. Attitudes to religious education are always at least satisfactory and often good. They are better in Years 7 to 9 than Year 10. This contributes to the pupils making good and satisfactory progress respectively. Pupils work efficiently, are happy to contribute to lessons, show respect for each other's views and take a pride in the presentation of their work. There is an attitude of inclusion for all. In all year groups, pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language progress at a similar rate.
145. A new agreed syllabus is being implemented and the curriculum provided for religious education covers the requirements of that syllabus. The impact of starting the examination courses in Year 9 means that not all world religions are covered in equal depth, and the early decision on examination could prevent some pupils from realising their potential. The curriculum has been enhanced by a visit to a Hindu temple and some speakers in Year 10, but there is scope for a greater use of artefacts and closer links with the community through more visits and speakers from different religious backgrounds. The subject makes a very good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral and social education. Attention is paid to the literacy needs of the pupils but the numerical aspects are not included. The use of ICT is also limited and needs development. The leadership and management of the department are good. Monitoring the work of the department is undertaken by scrutiny of the books of different groups but up to now there has been no observation of teaching.
146. There has been good progress since the last inspection. All of the positive aspects mentioned then have been maintained, the agreed syllabus is now being covered and all of the other areas of concern have been improved. The department has a very good base from which to progress further.